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BEFORE THE DAWN

A STORY OF PARIS AND THE
JACQUERIE

BY

GEORGE DULAC *pseud.*

George Perkins

NEW YORK & LONDON
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BEFORE THE DAWN.

CHAPTER I.

AT the distance of several leagues from Paris, on the edge of the forest of Ermonne, stood a cottage built of logs, turf and clay : a miserable dwelling, the home of a peasant, that is to say of a despised creature, a wretch derisively called Jacques Bonhomme. Let us enter. We see a rude table formed of slabs, two stools, on which are seated a man and a woman, a heap of straw in one corner serving for a bed, and a hearth on which smoulders a feeble fire, whose smoke escapes as best it may through an open hole in the roof.

On the clay floor are crouched three or four small children with wan pinched faces ; for hunger is here, here within easy reach of the game that crowds the forest. What prevents the miserable wretch from taking his bow and shooting one of the deer that come fearlessly to his very door, from snaring the hares that frisk about in the neighboring thickets ? What compels him to endure the sight of his famishing children, who stretch out their hands and ask for food ? This prevents him ; death, or his right hand stricken off, if he is detected in the act of killing the game that belongs to the nobles !

Are these the thoughts of this man as he slowly raises his head ? Perhaps so ; but other thoughts are working in the mind of the peasant Guillaume Callet to-night, as he

rises to his feet and takes down a rusty hunting spear from the wall.

"Where art thou going, Guillaume," asks his wife, "not to the forest?"

"Why not?" he answers roughly. "I am hungry, thou art hungry, our children cry for food. Yonder is food for all, why then should I not take it?"

His face has taken on a determined expression, and there is a sullen look in his eyes as he speaks, while he impatiently dashes aside the mass of coarse black hair that falls over his forehead. The woman began to weep, and fell on her knees.

"Get up, Joan," said her husband; "I am not going to the forest now; dry your eyes and fear not that I shall lose my hand. I have better use for it," and he strode out of the hut, followed by the sobs of Joan and the cries of the children. As he walked on with drooping head, he might have been taken for an evil spirit, so black was his brow, and so ferocious was the expression of his mouth and eyes: but he looked neither to right nor left, as, with his short spear in his hand, he walked with long and stealthy strides down the slope that led to the river.

It was a beautiful night; the summer breeze rustled through the branches of the trees that overhung the stream, and the water gleamed silver-like in the moonlight. In the silence of the evening one could hear the distant belling of the stags, and the occasional note of a night bird came floating out of the depth of the forest. The air was soft and cool as it touched the cheek of this man, who paused midway down the slope, and gazed eagerly before him. It was not the beauty of the scene that impressed him, for his eyes were intently fixed upon a level space of ground near the river bank. In the

centre of this plain rose a huge heap of stones, and as he strains his eyes he sees that this pile of stones is surrounded by men, and that others are moving toward it from every direction. Certain of this, he plunges forward again and does not stop until he reaches the place, and is greeted by a hundred peasants who have gathered there.

There is no noise, or shouting, or confusion: it is evidently a preconcerted meeting, and each man as he arrives seats himself upon one of the stones, or on the ground, and waits.

One by one come the peasants, until we see before us fully two hundred of them. They are men of all ages, from the old man to the beardless youth: men of every variety of feature and form, and yet there is a singular resemblance to be observed between them. None walked with a free and upright bearing; all moved as though bowed down by an actual, material weight. It was the inherited burden of centuries of oppression that rested upon them, an ineffaceable brand, a bodily curse. Their faces were more varied. Some had a hopeless look, as though long endurance had taught them to submit with sullen resignation to their fate; others were overcast with gloom, as though black thoughts were revolving in their minds; some expressed hope, others fear, and many a reckless unconcern.

Physical pain furrowed the brows of some, and famine glared from the eyes of scores of these despised slaves, who had gathered by the banks of the beautiful Marne, to listen to the words of Callet whom they looked up to as a leader.

He does not hesitate, but standing on a broad flat stone above the groups that surround him, and in plain

sight of all, he addresses them in words that rivet their attention. There is no shouting, no applause, but a breathless silence, as Guillaume Callet relates the history of their wrongs, and describes their condition of misery.

He asks why they should belong to the nobles; whether they are trees or stones that they must still cling to the ground where they were born, and pass from the bondage of the dying Seigneur to that of his heir; why they should be compelled to toil day after day, and receive no wages; why, when their harvest was ready to gather, they should be forced to leave it to perish, because their lords required their services, and released them when their grain was ruined. Why should they submit to the *corvée*, and why should the pigeons of the Seigneur fatten on the scanty harvest of the peasant? why must the peasant take his grain to the mill of the Seigneur, and his flour to his oven? why should all the fish in the river, and all the game in the forest belong to the noble, and who gave him the right to put the peasant to death, if he should snare a pheasant to make broth for his sick wife? Why should they pass their lives in bondage and misery; in misery of hunger, and cold, and nakedness, while their lords dwelt in comfort within their castle walls, while they feasted on the fat of the land, and drank the richest wines; while they clothed themselves in silk and velvet, and cloth of gold, and never knew what it was to shiver in the cold wind, or to lack food.

Why had God made them, if they must be slaves! had He given them life only that it might be spent in the service of the Seigneurs, who gave them nothing in return, not even protection?

"Oh, my brothers!" cried Callet, "what is left to us but despair! let us die then, but let us first be revenged

on our Seigneurs! They are cowards, for the foreigners have overcome and beaten them like slaves. But you say that they have better weapons than we, and armor and horses that we have not. Well, then, let us take them with our naked hands. Fire will consume their strong houses; let us gather fagots and burn them! What can we suffer more than we do now! is death worse, my brothers? No! for it is only a moment's pain; fear it not; follow me boldly, and we will tear down these robbers' nests; we will plunder the nobles of their gold, and silver, and rich garments. We will tear the soft robes from their wives and daughters—they shall be as naked and defenceless as our own; we will do to them as they have done to us. Yes, yes: we will put our coarse hands on their white necks, we will smear their soft cheeks with the blood of their husbands and brothers, and we will tear them limb from limb! We will be as pitiless as they have been! it will be our turn; they have done so to us, why should we not do so to them? Only cast away fear, follow me, and we will have our fill of revenge!

"Brothers, the time has come! never had we such an opportunity before. The Seigneurs are frightened by the English; many have been killed, more are prisoners, and if they are released, we shall have to toil the harder to pay their ransoms. Why should we rivet the chains around our necks? Let us join hands then and swear that we will have revenge!"

While speaking, the countenance of Callet had expressed all the ferocity of a tiger, mingled with the cunning of a wolf; the black thoughts that filled his heart were only half visible in his words, but his face portrayed them, and they were reflected in the faces of those who listened to him. All their brutal instincts had been

awakened by the words of Callet, and the effect was seen in the convulsive working of their features.

It was easy to believe that when the opportunity came, these peasants would not be restrained. No thought of God, no fear of punishment, no reverence for beauty or innocence would curb their brutality: they had heard words, that, sinking deep into their hearts fell into fertile soil and would speedily bring forth fruit.

A fortnight after this secret assembly, the peasants, led by Callet, attacked the Castle of Ervanne, murdered its defenders and committed such horrible outrages that it is impossible to describe them. After plundering the building they set fire to it, and departed with their booty to a fastness they had prepared in the forest, where they remained in readiness to make a second foray.

An opportunity soon presented itself, and several unprotected castles were attacked, burned, and their inhabitants tortured or butchered without mercy. At the news of his success the peasants flocked to the side of Callet, and his followers soon numbered several thousands of ignorant and ill-armed, but desperate men. The nobles were at first so surprised at these daring acts that they were stupefied; but quickly rousing themselves they began to take measures for the safety of their families. A great number of ladies were sent to the city of Meux which had been strongly fortified by the Dauphin Charles; all the neighboring gentlemen were summoned to assist in suppressing this unexpected rising, and they determined to inflict summary punishment upon the peasants. In the mean time the latter grew bolder, and availing themselves of the armories of the plundered castles roamed the country—sometimes in bands, sometimes

with the semblance of an army. A strange, hideous army it was, composed of these savages with unkempt hair and beards, low foreheads and treacherous eyes; with their brawny limbs arrayed in ill-assorted pieces of rusty armor, which was more of an impediment than a defence to them; armed with weapons to whose use they were not accustomed, a hideous and wolfish army: but they had succeeded in striking terror into the hearts of the nobles for a moment, and made good use of the time. The whole country between the Marne and Oise, to the very gates of Paris, was overrun and desolated; everywhere rose the smoke of burning castles, and from every side came the shrieks of the helpless victims of the peasants. The forests of Armanvillier, of Lagny and Crecy afforded them a refuge, and to those dense shades they withdrew after having glutted themselves with blood and plunder. But their chief stronghold was in the forest of Ermonne, near the spot where they had held their first assembly: here it was that Guillaume Callet had his lair, and from this spot he directed the furious attacks of his followers, dividing them into bands, or uniting all when a strong place was to be assailed.

He had brought his wife and children to this retreat, as had many of the peasants, and having built themselves a number of rude huts, they returned to them after each successful raid and gave themselves up to the wildest revelry. It is here that we find Callet one night, about a month after the first rising of the peasantry. Dressed in armor, but without the helmet, with a red scarf tied about his waist and a huge mace in his hand, he is giving judgment upon a few unfortunates who have been taken alive. His justice is swift and bloody; all that is necessary for him to know is whether the captive

belongs to the hated class of the oppressors. Satisfied of this, he dashes his mace upon the block that serves for a table, and at this sign the condemned is led outside the hut and instantly put to death. There is no sympathy at this tribunal: no thought of mercy, no time given for the consolations of religion, no human shrinking from death, or at the sight of blood. All is inexorable, hard, pitiless. Even the women and children seem to take pleasure in the sight of the hot blood, as it springs from the headless trunk at their feet. Is it not the life-blood of one of those who have trampled them in the dust; who have taken the food from their mouths; who have torn the struggling daughter from the mother, and laughed at the misery of their violated homes! Why then should they care, unless it were to rejoice at the sight? nor was it unnatural that Joan should laugh as one of her children ran into the hut, with a piece of cloth that he had steeped in blood and then wound about his waist, in imitation of his father's red scarf.

"So, child," she exclaimed, "thou beginnest early; that is right—that is brave!" and the boy walked about the room proud of his badge, and learning to familiarize himself with blood.

The poor Joan whom we saw crouching in rags before her smouldering fire, is now transformed: clothed in silk, and with a velvet mantle, a hood with a heron's plume on her head, she flaunts backward and forward, never weary of looking at the sheen of the silk and feeling its softness. This little settlement was full of these women, arrayed in the spoils of castles from which the noble ladies had fled in haste, leaving everything behind, fortunate indeed if so they had escaped. The men, gathered together in motley groups, also presented a

singular and grotesque appearance, wearing here a hauberk, and there a helmet; and many with rich cloaks thrown over their almost naked bodies. Some were armed with sword and dagger, and some with bows, but more with clubs and knives. As Callet sat in his hut, he thought with exultation of the changes he had accomplished, and of those he would yet make; he reflected with pride that it was his hand that had caused the destruction of so many fair castles: he had made good his promises—he, and those that followed him, had eaten and drunk their fill; they had gratified their passions; the nobles had felt the hand of the people, and since they would not do the people justice, they should perish.

“Yes,” exclaimed Callet, “they shall die; not one shall live, except to be a slave! Ho, Jacques,” he cried to a tall fierce looking fellow who that moment came in, carrying an axe dripping with blood. “Ho, Jacques—we have had rare sport to-day!”

“Yes,” replied Jacques, flinging his axe upon the ground, “and we will have plenty more before we finish with these proud Seigneurs, brother.”

“That we will, Jacques! More, more! Come, let us drink!” and leaning their elbows on the table, they tossed off cup after cup of wine, growing more talkative and merry after each draught.

“Art not weary of serving thy master so many years, Jacques?” said Callet. “Art not weary of toiling in summer and winter, with never a *dénier* at the end to keep thee warm?”

“Yes, brother, but that is ended now, and the Seigneurs shall toil for us. Were it not fair, brother, if we should make them our slaves?”

“Yes, Jacques, but we must first kill as many of them

as we can, for they are too strong for us."

"Let us kill them, Guillaume, until so few are left that we can take them for bondslaves!"

"That would be a good revenge, brother. By the horns of the devil! we will live in their castles, we will wear their fine raiment, we will ride on their horses, and drink their wine."

"Ho, ho!" laughed Jacques, "and they shall live in our huts, and be clothed in our rags, and drink water from the ditches as we have done. Yes, brother, they shall toil for us without payment and we will beat them and flay them alive if they try to escape. Ho, ho! it is but just; so they have done to us, so will we do to them!"

"But first we must kill more of them; do not forget that, Jacques."

"No, no, Guillaume, my axe is ready, and it is thirsty! See, it is not rusty yet."

"*It shall be*, brother, for we have more work before us, and we will have more hands to help us, too."

"Yes," said Jacques, "another band came in to-night."

"Good! how many have we now, brother?"

"About eight thousand—here, and at the other places."

Callet thought a moment. "'Tis almost enough to attack Meux," he said, "and if the Provost sends us help, we shall succeed."

"What, brother, will the Provost join us then?"

"Yes," replied Callet, "for the nobles hate him and seek to overthrow him; he promises to aid us."

"Ho, Guillaume, that is good news; but what said you about Meux? it is a strong place, and you know there are knights within, and men-at-arms."

"Yes, Jacques, and know you what besides?"

"No, brother."

"I will tell you," said Callet, with a diabolical look. "The lord Regent has sent his wife there, and she has taken with her all of her ladies ; and many of the Seigneurs have sent their wives and daughters to the city for safety. By the devil, there will be rich booty !"

"The fiend aid us, Guillaume ! but if we fail, there will be bloody work."

"But we will succeed, Jacques ; think only of that ! and then what will the proud nobles do ? Will they not roar for mercy ? Ho, ho ! we can make our own bargain with them, brother !"

For a long time they continued to talk, drinking meanwhile such huge quantities of the fiery wine, that they finally succumbed to its influence, and after vain attempts to remain on their seats, sank upon the floor and resigned themselves to the stupor that overpowered them.

CHAPTER II.

WHILE the surrounding country is overrun by the infuriated peasants, Paris is divided and uncertain—a volcano which the slightest thing may startle into irruption. The minds of men are tossed on a sea of doubt. A breath may incline them this way or that.

Recollection of their misery in the past, dread of the future, idleness, poverty, hunger : these were the grim phantoms that sate by thousands of hearths, that filled the minds of the ignorant, the brutal and the desperate with thoughts that seethed and bubbled in their hearts, and only waited for an opportunity to break forth in deeds of violence.

Yes, one might see that here, as in the country, men were dissatisfied and ripe for mischief.

But in the country the peasants were united ; all suffered in the same degree, and were alike desperate, while many conflicting parties met in Paris. There was danger ; the temper of the mob was ominous, but it was still within control. There was sympathy for the peasants in their revolt, sympathy for them even in the excesses they had committed. Their desire for revenge was echoed by many who would gladly have joined them in their work of robbery and murder, but these were held in check by the more sober citizens, who had interests of property at stake, by the police of the city, and by the authority of the Town Council.

Therefore, Paris still shut her gates against the bands

of peasants, and refused to give them countenance or assistance.

Various parties were represented then in the crowd that surrounded the house of the Provost of the Merchants, one afternoon in the early part of June, 1358.

There were men who had left their homes in the narrow streets that opened on the rue St. Martin, and on the quays ; from the crowded courts of la Cité, and students from their dormitories on the left bank of the Seine. There too were millers from the Pont des Moulins, butchers from the Grand Boucherie, and tanners from their quarter hard by the Hôtel Dieu—all glad of a pretext to escape from the suffocating atmosphere of their dwellings, and the unsavory odors that arose in clouds from the reeking alleys. All had been drawn thither to learn, if possible, the result of the meeting of the town council, which had assembled to decide upon the action of the city, and the attitude to be taken toward the insurgent peasants.

It was known that some of the council openly favored and would give them assistance, while others were violently opposed to this course ; and the crowd that pressed around the house, waited impatiently to learn whether the city was to espouse the cause of the nobles or people. While waiting, they amused themselves according to their various humors. Students might be seen striding about with an air of reckless indifference, swinging their long sticks and singing snatches of songs, not too refined. Rival apprentices jostled each other, and fought for the honor of their respective masters : laughter and curses resounded on every side, though some men there were whose faces were grave, and wore an expression of anxiety, as they waited for the appearance of the burgher councillors.

In the mean time the shadows lengthened, and the evening breeze swept the fresh air along the Seine. The bells of Notre Dame rang out, hushing into silence those who listened to them with a feeling of awe, as though rebuked by the voices of another world. At this moment the door opened, and the council came forth, passing silently down the steps, and through the crowd. As they disappeared the people began to shout: "The Provost! The Provost!" In answer to their cries, Etienne Marcel presented himself, and demanded: "What would you of me, citizens?"

"No war! no taxation! bread for our children! down with the nobles!" shouted the mob.

"You ask many hard things," said Marcel. "How can I give them to you? We have no war now. Bread! we must all earn it with our hands. Taxation! has not the Regent refused to relieve you of it? Have not I, at the risk of my life, petitioned him to grant you relief? Have I not taken your part against the nobles?"

Cries of "Yes, yes!" were heard, but, motioning for silence, he continued. "Bread cannot be cheap while the fields lie waste and untilled; and they will be waste so long as the nobles make war. Would you join the peasantry and destroy the Seigneurs?" "Yes, yes! No, no!" resounded on all sides. "But, citizens," said Marcel, "your council has decided that you must not join the peasants; we must shut the gates against them. Ask me no more, citizens. Since the Regent abandons us, we must trust in God. Go home quietly, resume your occupations, work with your hands, preserve the city from the English and from Navarre. When the Dauphin returns he will reward you."

Having delivered this vague address, the Provost re-

tired into the house, and the people slowly dispersed in no very contented frame of mind.

"What has happened to the Provost," said a burly butcher to his companion as they turned away. "He talks of God's help now : he was not so pious when we followed him into the Louvre, and made an end of the lord of Clermont and the marshal of Champagne. Ah, that was a day ! Were you there, Pierre ? "

"No, but you told me how the lord Dauphin gave his gold-fringed hood to the Provost."

"Yes, yes," interrupted the butcher, "and he put the Provost's hood on his own head, but by the Saints ! he did not seem to be at ease ; he did not like the fit, ho ! Pierre."

"No, but it was better than not to have a head to wear the hood on."

"You may say so ! that was a fine day, Pierre. The floor was as red with the blood of the two Seigneurs as my floor is on Saturdays, and the lord Dauphin's silk robe was all bespattered with red drops, so that it would have done you good to see it ! "

"That is the way we will serve all the nobles," said Pierre. "Did you mark what the Provost said just now about the Regent's deserting us ? What does that mean ? "

"Why, he meant that we would have to depend on ourselves, Pierre, and expect no help ; that we were stout lads and must take care of ourselves."

"No such thing, lad : he meant to let us know that if the Regent and the nobles will not give us what we want, we must take it from them."

"Take it from them ! by the Saints, I don't understand you, Pierre ! "

"Why, look you, these proud nobles have fine castles

and horses, and gold plates to eat from, and fish and poultry and bread to eat."

"Ho! Pierre, you make my mouth water! but what has that to do with us?"

"Look you," answered Pierre, "what would you do if you could get into one of these fine castles."

"Get my fill of meat and bread and wine, Pierre."

"Yes, but you would have to beg for it like a dog; and suppose you and I and a dozen stout lads could get into one of these houses, and kill all the men, what would prevent our taking all the meat and wine, and gold and silver we could find? ha! what would hinder us?"

The butcher gazed at his companion with open mouth, and gasped. "I never thought of that, Pierre. Surely we could take all, if there was no one to hinder us, but there would be, you know; for these Seigneurs always have plenty of men-at-arms and servants to fight for them."

"Not always," said Pierre, "for the most of them are away now following their masters, and there are enough places where there is no guard besides the dogs and the women."

"Ho! I would soon finish the dogs!" cried the butcher. "When will we begin, Pierre? Devil take me! it is so long since I have had anything better than muddy beer to drink, that I long to find some good liquor, and mayhap we shall find some casks of Bordeaux wine in those same fine houses. Ho! it makes my throat dry to think of it!"

"Well, lad," replied Pierre, "we will find them soon, and you shall have your fill of Bordeaux wine, and better things too, if you are bold."

Very different were the comments of the more intelli-

gent artisans and members of the merchant class, who could not conceal their disappointment at the vague words they had heard from Marcel.

They had hoped for some assurance that would stimulate and enliven trade, that would restore confidence, or at least give them the hope of protection of life and property.

They had hoped for bread and received a stone. Still, they placed no evil construction on the reticence of the Provost, and were unwilling to abandon their confidence in him.

The ignorant, however, glad to seize upon any pretext to gratify their hatred of the nobles, did not hesitate to think that Marcel would be on their side in the event of an outbreak, and indeed his previous actions and his words to-day gave some coloring of reason to their belief.

The crowd had disappeared ; night had fallen and the rising moon threw a broad beam of light across the water of the river as two figures emerged from the shadow of a tall building near the house of Marcel, and moving rapidly toward the quay followed it for some distance, until, reaching a narrow street, they entered it and stopped before a hostelry. In answer to a loud knock the door was partially opened and a head thrust out, while its owner demanded in no pleasant tone who it was desired admittance. "Open, Robert," was the reply. "Do not stand staring as though you thought we were ghosts. What! do you not remember me?"

"Yes, my lord, but I thought you were in Champagne."

"Never mind what you thought ; you see I am here, so down with your chain, Robert Bonel!"

The head was withdrawn, and the rattling of the chain

betokened the hospitable efforts of the master of the hostelry, who in a moment threw wide the door and admitted his evidently unexpected guests. As soon as they were within Bonel proceeded to secure the door again with a strong chain and a double lock, and then ushered his guests into a room furnished with some benches, two beds and a table.

The strangers threw off the cloaks in which they were muffled rather more closely than was comfortable on so warm an evening, and he who had spoken addressed his companion, who was a youth of about twenty-two years.

"Well, Guy, if you are as weary as I, you will not be sorry to throw yourself on one of these settles, and take a little rest, while our host fetches us wherewithal to satisfy our hunger and thirst. Ha! Robert, have you one of your good pasties for us to-night? I am well nigh starved, and my throat is as dry as a day in August! Fetch us food, and some of that good white wine of which you boast so much." When Bonel had gone upon his errand to the larder, the marquis de la Rivière flung himself at full length upon one of the wooden settles, and said: "Did'st hear the speech of the Provost, Guy, and how the people hung upon his words? He is a popular knave, and dangerous. Did'st mark what he said about the Dauphin?"

"Yes," returned Guy, "but the people did not seem satisfied, and I thought the Provost did not wish to speak."

"No, by my faith, he would have slunk away like the others, but he did not dare. By St. Genevieve, but the rabble asked him some hard questions."

"Which he did not answer," said Guy.

"No, and better men than he have found those same questions hard enough. By heaven! 'tis ever the same

with these rascally knaves. Bread, bread and no taxes! down with the Seigneurs too! These villains grow bold, and need to be let blood, Guy de la Roche, for they would like to exterminate us: these rats, these clods! Can'st tell me why they hate us so bitterly?"

"No, Marquis, not I, and they do not all feel thus. My peasants are quiet and happy; they have enough to eat and drink, and I think they have an affection for me."

"Do not trust to it, Guy, for the devil is abroad in the land. Curses on the English! 'tis they have disturbed everything: they beat us on every hand, and the peasants are losing their confidence in us. They think because some of us fled at Poitiers, that all are cowards. St. Denis! if this goes on, we must give up fighting to women and boys."

"I wish I had been in that battle," said Guy.

"Thank heaven you were not;" rejoined de la Riviere, "for you would then have seen our noblest chivalry disgraced. Your father fought bravely, Guy: I was close beside him when he fell."

"He would never have turned his back!" exclaimed Guy proudly.

"I believe you, for braver knight never drew sword."

"And you were taken prisoner, Marquis, were you not?"

The marquis ground his teeth as he replied. "Yes, but, by heaven! I was taken sword in hand, and yielded me to a knight, and not to one of those base-born yeomen, as some did, whose gentle blood should have taught them to die, rather than to yield to such ignoble varlets. Ah, Guy, the sun will never shine brightly on France again, until the memory of that day is cleansed in the blood of the English. We have learned a lesson, but we should have learned it ten years ago; for at Crécy it was those

same villanous long bows that won the day for Edward. And yet like fools we thought we could charge up that narrow lane at Poitiers, and recked nothing of the thick-set hedges that concealed the bowmen, who plied their devilish shafts so thick. Double fools that we were, to entangle ourselves in such a net! Ah, Guy, your father saw the fatal mistake, and if he had lived, perhaps he could have extricated us; but we had no leader, and when lord Chandos set his men upon our flank, all was lost, a panic seized the men-at-arms; they threw down their swords and let themselves be butchered like calves."

"That was a sad day for us all, Marquis. But have you heard news of the king, and of how he fares? Does not the matter of his ransom drag?"

"Yes, Guy. The English would have us dismember France, and the king will not have his freedom at such a price."

"He has a gallant spirit, has he not, Marquis?"

"Yes, he is a true and blameless knight, and misfortune cannot crush his heart."

"Will the Dauphin be able to stand against the English if war is renewed?" asked Guy.

"I fear not," said the marquis. "It is useless for us to meet them again in the open field, until we have recovered from the spell of terror that seems to be upon us. We must pursue another policy. This is my counsel to the Regent, and the Cardinal Bishops both support me. So does de Savoisy. When the truce expires, we will refuse all offers of battle."

"What," said Guy, "not meet them in the field?"

"We must not, Guy; another defeat would destroy us, and the English would be masters of France. I tell you that the fiend has woven a spell about us, and we can-

not stand against the invader ; and yet," continued the marquis, "it is not because our nobles are not so brave as of old, but because they have been astonished and terrified so that they have no longer confidence in themselves. We must have patience until they recover from this fright ; until they see that the English are not gods or devils, but men who can suffer from hunger and thirst, and who can be killed. We will annoy them, we will starve them, hang about them like gadflies. We will destroy their convoys, and cut off their detachments ; we will weaken them in every possible way, and you will see that we will gradually destroy them. But above all we must learn to think of them as mortal men, no stronger, no more skilful, no braver than we. This is the lesson we must learn before we rid France of this swarm of locusts that devours the land."

Guy de la Roche listened attentively, but with some dissatisfaction, to this speech.

It seemed to him that it would be an unworthy act to refuse a fair defiance, to avoid an offered battle. His blood rebelled at the thought of submitting to the taunts of an enemy, for he was too young to fully understand the wisdom of this Fabian policy, and he did not realize that it was this high spirit and hot blood, that had hurried the nobles to their destruction at the fatal battles of Crécy and Poitiers. "Never," he cried, "the Dauphin would never command us to refuse to fight ! My dear Marquis, you are too brave to be willing to follow such a course. You who have fought so bravely since the commencement of these wars."

"For that very reason I have learned wisdom," replied de la Rivière, "and we must follow this policy, however hateful it may be to us ; there is no other way now. But

enough of this subject. When are we to have our supper? Hollo, Robert! hollo, I say! What the devil!" he exclaimed, as Bonel came in, "Do you have your larder chained up as well as your door? One would say that you do not put much faith in the Provost's police, ha!"

"These be evil times, my lord," said Bonel, who now placed some food upon the table. "These be evil times, and it becomes every man to guard his house. There be so many prowlers abroad that my chain is none too strong to keep them out."

"Well, Robert," said the marquis, making a ravenous attack upon the viands, "and so you were surprised to see me to-night."

"Yes, my lord, for I thought you were far enough from Paris."

"The count de la Roche and I have been making a little visit, and I must be gone before morning. See that you speak not of seeing me here."

"No living soul shall know of it from me, my lord."

"Very well. I shall stay here until near daybreak, Robert, and hark ye, if I should knock again, do not be so long about undoing your chain. Faith, one would suppose you were guarding some famous treasure! Have you grown rich in Paris, that you barricade your doors in this fashion, Robert?"

"No, no, my lord! how should I be rich? what with bread so dear, and game and poultry so hard to get, and wine above price since the last battle, and the bad money, and these students who roam the city in bands. 'Tis needful enough, I trow, to lock the door against *them*, my lord, for an half a dozen of them smell the steams from your kitchen, you had as well try to feed a pack of wolves!"

"Ha, ha! So these gentlemen have good appetites, Robert!"

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Bonel, lifting his hands, "it was only last Thursday, my lord, I was in the kitchen when I heard a loud thump as though a tree had fallen against the side of the house, and when I looked out there were ten of those scholars pounding on the door with their big clubs and shouting out that they were hungry. Saint Martin! They looked hungry enough, I warrant you!"

"Did you let them in?" said Guy de la Roche.

"Heaven forbid, my lord. I would as lief have let in a pack of devils! Let them in! I bade them go carry their hungry stomachs to the Provost."

"I hope you do not often treat your guests so, Bonel, for if you do may our Lady defend the poor traveller," said Guy, smiling.

"Oh, no, my lord, but that is the reason why I keep the strong chain my lord marquis blames me for."

"I understand, Bonel, you examine the applicants before you give them admission."

"Yes, my lord, and when I spy a student with his uncombed beard and his big club I shut the door fast in his face. May the Holy Virgin protect me from them, for they eat like the mill hopper and drink like the sea, and if they get in here more than once in a year I am a ruined man."

The marquis and Guy laughed heartily at Bonel's dislike for the students, and the former asked, "What have these scholars done to you, my good fellow? methinks you have some reason for hating them so roundly. Come now, have they never so sharp appetites they must be

satisfied at last and they pay you in good money I suppose."

"If they would only do that," replied Bonel, "it would not be so bad; but they haggle over the price of a bowl of wine, and pay for it in bad money if they can, as I know to my cost, for I had taken four livres from *tournois* them before I found that they were all light weight: and then, my lord, if my wife waits upon them they are ever chucking her under the chin, or trying to put their arms about her waist. Yes, and one of them kissed her, the villain!"

"And did your good Susanne object to such treatment, Robert!" said the marquis laughing. "She used to be a comely girl. Faith, I remember her red cheeks and black eyes."

Bonel hesitated a little, "Well, my lord," he said slowly, "I think sometimes that Susanne looks at the men too much, but she means no harm; and she was angry enough."

"I thought you had some good reason for hating these gentlemen of the University, Robert. Well, chain up your door, my good fellow, keep an eye on Susanne, and if any man puts his arm about her waist put you your gripe on his throat."

"That I will, my lord," said Bonel, "and right good will have I to choke the breath out of the body of that same red bearded scoundrel who kissed Susanne!"

"Do so, Robert, never flinch from him, man. Ha! I am glad to see that this tavern life has not quenched all your spirit."

"Never trust me, my lord," replied Bonel, "if he does not feel my fingers on his windpipe if he ever shows his ugly face at the Cerf Blanc again!"

The marquis, who began to grow weary of the domestic

troubles of his host, now intimated to him that he wished to be alone, and Bonel, wishing the gentlemen a good night, withdrew, still muttering threats against the red bearded violator of Susanne's lips.

The young count de la Roche had listened with much amusement, though wondering at the acquaintance of the marquis with an obscure inn-keeper, and as soon as they were alone, he inquired who Bonel was.

The marquis explained that he had been in his service for many years, until, finding him anxious to open a hostelry, he had given him the means to do so when he married Susanne, a pretty girl with whom Robert had been madly in love. "I have no doubt the jade leads the poor fellow a merry dance," said the marquis with a laugh; "for she knows well how to attract the men with her big black eyes, and I fancy that master Red Beard's caresses were not so unwelcome to her as to her husband."

"That would account for his rage," said Guy, "and the learned Red Beard may look to himself, for if our host meets him, there will be broken heads."

"Well, Robert is no coward," rejoined the marquis, "and can take his own part with club or dagger. Now, my dear Guy, you will not forget the instructions I have given you, and remember that the Dauphin is bestowing upon you a weighty trust. You must rally about you all the loyal citizens and communicate with all the nobles who still remain in the city. I trust not this false Provost and think he means to assist the peasants and give up the city to Navarre, and you must find means to foil him. Methinks the best part of the citizens will be for the king and the Dauphin when it comes to the test, but you must organize them and prevent the treachery that the Provost meditates."

"I like not the task, my lord," replied the count.

"Think not so, dear Guy, for 'tis not ignoble to persuade men to remain true to their duty and allegiance, and this will be your task. Be cautious, do not let your hot blood get the better of you. 'Tis not because you are not brave, that I have selected you for this, but because I think you bear some of your father's wisdom in your young head; and if you save Paris for the Dauphin, Guy, that will be no unworthy deed."

"I shall do my best, Marquis," replied the count, and having arranged some necessary details, they threw themselves on the beds and were soon in a sound slumber.

CHAPTER III.

¹ AFTER the departure of the marquis, Guy de la Roche found himself in a perplexing situation. He was sensible that a great trust had been placed in him in confiding to him the duty of drawing together the loyal party in Paris, and yet he would have preferred to serve the royal cause in another way. There was no alternative, however. The height to which the peasant revolt had grown, demanded that speedy and effectual measures should be taken for its suppression, and while the nobles undertook this task, it was equally important that Paris should be prevented from giving assistance to the rebels.

The councillors of the Regent Charles knew that the city was wavering, and they had resolved to make an attempt to unite the law-abiding citizens, and to form an organized resistance to the plots of those who were inflaming the minds of the rabble. If open treachery were attempted, they believed the citizens would resist it, and their design was to discover whether the Provost really meditated treason, and if so, to prevent his carrying it suddenly into execution. It was with this end in view that count Guy de la Roche had been sent to Paris, much against his will indeed, but yielding to the persuasions of the marquis de la Rivière, who had been his father's dearest friend, and who had the greatest influence over him.

The estates of count Guy lay to the north-west of Paris, a region that had not been affected by the rising of

the peasants, and it was hard for him to realize that these men, whom he had always seen respectful and submissive, should have the temerity to revolt against the rule of the nobles. It is true that he treated his serfs and peasants kindly, not allowing them to be oppressed, and providing for their comfort in many ways, but it never occurred to him that it was his duty to do this, and if the condition of his peasantry was better than that of others, it was because he took pride in having it so, rather than because he thought himself under any obligation to treat them kindly.

When the news of the insurrection along the Marne reached him, he felt all the indignation and horror natural to one of a superior caste, when learning that his home has been polluted by an inferior being. He hastened with de la Rivière to the camp of the Dauphin, eager to join in the pursuit and punishment of the wretches who had dared to rebel against their rightful lords. But he had been immediately ordered to accompany the marquis to Paris, and the latter was desired to explain to him the necessity of placing all good citizens on their guard, if they wished to prevent the city from falling into the hands of the king of Navarre, whom Marcel had liberated from prison. The Dauphin was naturally incensed at the conduct of the Provost. The outrage against himself could scarcely be forgiven, and the blood of the murdered marshals of Champagne and Normandy cried aloud for vengeance, while the humiliation he had undergone in having the Provost dictate reforms, could not easily be forgotten. It was not strange that Charles should feel little confidence in Etienne Marcel, whose influence with the people had

grown so great that he was the actual master of Paris. It was only natural that he should distrust and fear him.

It was upon these things that count Guy reflected earnestly, as he sat in his room at the Cerf Blanc; but the more he pondered the more confusing were the difficulties that presented themselves to him, until, hoping to forget them, he took his sword and throwing on his cloak descended the stairs, where he found Bonel engaged in an animated discussion with his wife Susanne, a red-cheeked dame whose plump figure and large black eyes confirmed the description he had received of her from the marquis. Making his way into the narrow street, he followed it to the quay, where he found himself at once in the midst of a throng of people.

He was not a stranger in Paris, although he usually chose to live at one of his Chateaux where he was at liberty to devote himself to the pleasures of the chase, and of falconry, to which he was ardently attached.

His education had not been neglected, for he had been taught to read and write both in French and Latin; accomplishments sufficiently rare at that day. His father had also taken him some years before to Italy, and they had visited Milan, Florence and Venice. The latter city had made a wonderful impression upon the mind of the youth. The splendor of the ducal court, the refinement and luxury that he witnessed, were revelations to him, and being gifted with an observing mind and a strong imagination, he had stored his memory with many pleasant recollections. As he walked on, he could not avoid comparing Paris with those cities he had visited. For the high, narrow dwellings that fronted the river bore little resemblance to the stately palaces that lined the grand canal, up to whose sculptured entrances one ascended by flights

of noble steps ; from whose balconies one might watch the water gleaming in the sunlight, and see the gondolas darting back and forth. The waters of the Seine could boast of a few fishing boats from Rouen, some sloops freighted with vegetables and fruit : but how poor and barren in comparison with the proud galleys of Venice, laden with the merchandise of the world. The oranges, lemons and figs of the Mediterranean isles ; the wines of Cyprus, the precious marbles and porphyry of Greece, the rare and lovely work of beaten gold from Constantinople, silks from China, and Persian carpets ; while India sent her fabrics of cotton, damasks, cloth of gold, spices, perfumes, pearls and gems. It was doubtless an unwise commencement of his mission, to lose himself in such a reverie ; but it was rudely interrupted by a familiar voice.

“Why, my dear Count, whither are you going so fast without saluting your friends ?”

The speaker, a young man of about Guy's age, was richly dressed in the fashion of the period, though his undergarments were almost concealed by his mantle of black velvet slashed with crimson which fell nearly to his feet. The latter were encased in long pointed shoes, and under the folds of his cloak might be seen the hilt of his sword, a dagger with a curiously carved handle, and the embroidered belt that supported them. On his head he wore a hood of black satin fringed with gold, and the face that looked out from under it was a very gay and good-humored one, as its owner, the vicomte d'Ervand, seized the arm of count Guy, and the two friends strolled on side by side.

“I am delighted to see you, Henri,” said the count, “I have just arrived and have met no one as yet. Can you

tell me whether there are many gentlemen at present in Paris?"

"No," returned d'Ervand, "there are but few here, for nearly all followed the Dauphin when he left the city, and others have gone to join the marquis de la Rivière, who is gathering a force to put down the peasants, though you should know that better than I. By my faith! I should have gone also, but to say truth there is a charming damsel here—"

"To whom you have lost your heart I suppose," interrupted Guy. "Well, does she return your flame?"

"No, by St. Genevieve! though I have sworn by all the gods and goddesses that she shall! but what can I do, since I do not know her, and must fain content myself with vows that she cannot hear, and glances that she refuses to return. Peste! 'tis too hard to worship at so distant a shrine, and I begin to think I must console myself elsewhere. There be nymphs enough who would gladly smile on me, I trow!"

"Never be so faint-hearted, Vicomte. She will relent at last."

"I doubt it much," rejoined d'Ervand, "for a whole week, by St. Genevieve! have I paced the street under this window, and never so much as a smile will she give me for my pains. Ha! yonder is my fair lady;—is she not lovely, Count?"

Glancing up, Guy saw a young girl seated near a window that overlooked the river. She was indeed lovely, but the young count had only time to see the flash of a pair of eyes that seemed to him of deepest violet hue, and a wealth of golden brown hair that gleamed through the net-work that confined it, ere the fair owner drew back from the window to the interior of the apartment.

"She is charming, Vicomte," said Guy. "Do you not know her name?"

"Not I, and since she disdains me thus, I forswear her, and abandon her to her fate!"

"Not a hard one, I hope," said Guy, laughing.

"O, no, only that she may sometime regret having scorned the devotion of the vicomte d'Ervand. I wish her no greater punishment, and so farewell to my dream. What, shall I go fight the peasants, Guy, and wilt thou go with me?"

"Nay, I cannot," replied the count, "though I wish it were possible. But I must stay here."

"Adieu then, dear Guy, and if time hangs heavy on your hands, go pay your *devoirs* to my scornful beauty. Who knows, perhaps she may smile on you."

"Perhaps I may take you at your word, Vicomte."

"All the better," said he, "you have my permission;" and laughing gayly, the young men parted.

CHAPTER IV.

DAY after day passed by, and count Guy still remained uncertain as to the best means of accomplishing his mission. The nobles who remained in Paris would willingly have joined him in an attempt to overthrow the Provost of the merchants, whom they detested. But they were too few to make head against the formidable party that supported Marcel, and would have disdained to act in concert with the bourgeoisie. The young count soon determined that it was upon the latter he must depend; and one of those fortunate accidents which chance sometimes throws in our way, procured for him the acquaintance of a man of the people, who soon proved himself both willing and able to aid him. This man was François Maillart, a wine-merchant, a member of the burgher council, well known and held in high esteem by all. Through Maillart, count Guy became acquainted with some of his friends: goldsmiths, armorers, tanners, dealers in wool and cloth; and he found many of them to be men whose views had been widened by travel, by intercourse with the cities of Brabant and Flanders, by study of the methods followed in the industrial establishments of Ghent, Bruges and Ypres, where they had learned that industry and skill are the sources of wealth and that war is fatal to the successful carrying on of trade.

Others had visited Italy and Spain, and among the former the count found some who had been surprised and delighted. as he himself had been, with the Italian cities

where there existed a culture and refinement so superior to their own. He was astonished to find here a class of men who could comprehend and sympathize with him; who had the same pride in their country; who assured him that they felt no hatred of the nobles, that they had no desire to demand unreasonable privileges, and only wished to be protected, and to carry on their business unmolested.

He perceived that if they were allowed to pursue their way in peace, if they were not oppressed by taxes and forced loans, here was the beginning of a new source of wealth and power for France; and he determined to use all his influence in their favor. Having thus shown that count Guy had begun to recognize estimable qualities in a class of men that he had been taught to think contemptible, let us enter the shop of the worthy Maillart.

It is evening, and we find him giving some instructions to one of his assistants.

"See that the iron shutters are well fastened, Pierre," he said, "and make haste, for supper is waiting, and mother Maillart doth not like to have the soup grow cold"; then after casting a careful glance about the well-stored shop, he ascended the stairs to the rooms above. While Pierre finishes his task, we will take the liberty of examining his face, which is without a beard, and is far from handsome: a retreating forehead is overhung by a shock of colorless hair; his nose is small and shapeless, like a lump of dough flattened against his face; his thick protruding lips are not prepossessing, and his pale blue eyes are restless in their stealthy, sidelong glance. In a word, Pierre is a treacherous looking fellow. He is not a Frenchman, but a Fleming whom Maillart had found one day perishing of hunger and to whom, pitying

the forlorn condition of the stranger, he had given food and shelter, until, finding him quick to learn, he had taken him into his employment. As he was always at his post and performed his duties satisfactorily, his master had hitherto had no reason to be dissatisfied with him; but he had noticed of late that Pierre cast many glances at his daughter Jeanne, who, however, did not receive them with any favor, but quite the contrary. Her cold demeanor only served as fuel to the flame that had begun to burn in the breast of Pierre, who, finding that his advances met with no encouragement, relapsed into a sullen and silent admiration. All this was not understood by the good merchant, but it had not escaped the watchful eye of mother Maillart who had never liked or trusted the Fleming. She had spoken to Jeanne about his behavior, and was glad to see that she shared her dislike and aversion. In the mean time as Pierre confined his attentions to glances that were withdrawn as soon as he saw that they were observed, she did not speak to her husband, who, as we have said, had only begun to suspect the admiration of which his daughter was the object. Having finished his preparations for the night, Pierre followed his master whom he found already seated at the table with his wife and daughter. The former was an honest-looking woman with keen dark eyes that rested proudly on Jeanne, a maiden of perhaps eighteen summers. Maillart too looks fondly upon her, as she assists her mother in the duties of the table, and Pierre also steals a sidelong glance at the pretty figure, dressed in a close fitting robe of fine gray cloth, open sufficiently to show the contour of a finely moulded throat and neck. Her hair is confined by a silver net, and her large brown eyes are full of merriment, as she replies to the jests of

her father upon her fine appearance. "My girl," said he, "where got you that fashion of binding your hair? in silver, too! why you extravagant hussy, do you think that fine gray cloth at four livres the yard and silver nets grow in the streets?"

"I know not, father," rejoined Jeanne, "I will look to-morrow, for truly I must have a new kirtle, must I not, my mother?"

"Why, child," replied her mother, "you had a new kirtle but last Easter."

"Yes, I know, but that is a long time ago; oh, a very long time. Yes, I must go to-morrow and see if they grow in the streets as my father says."

"I said not that child," replied her father, laughing, "only whether you thought such things might so easily be found. Do you not know that money is scarce, and trade ruined? how then can I buy all these gewgaws for thee?"

"I knew that money was scarce and that trade was ruined last Easter too," answered Jeanne with a little pout, "and yet I got a new kirtle then."

"And the gray dress and the silver net and the fine hose and many other things as well," said her mother; "but we will look at the old kirtle to-morrow, my dear, and if you really need another—"

"Why, you will buy it for your little Jeanne, will you not? there, I knew you would not refuse me!" and the impulsive girl sprang up, kissed her mother, and was back in her seat in a moment.

Maillart looked at his wife and laughed. "So she twirls us about her fingers," he said. "Well, well, she is a good daughter, thank God."

"Have you never a kiss for me, mistress Jeanne?" he said, as they rose from the table.

Placing the tips of her fingers on her father's ears, Jeanne drew down his head and kissed him on the mouth. "There," said she, "now am I to look on the trees for my new kirtle?"

"No, no, child," cried he, laughing; "only spare my ears, and you shall have all you ask."

Pierre had looked on at this scene in sullen silence, and as he now prepared to leave the room his master said: "What ails you to-night, lad, that you cannot speak a word or smile; art sick?"

"No, master, but these are ill times for smiles or merry words, though mistress Jeanne doth make light of lack of trade and gold."

"Thank God," said Maillart, "she hath no need to know that there is lack of either; and a smile and a jest hurt no one, Pierre. Trouble not yourself about the bad times, my lad! God will send better!"

"Or the devil send worse," muttered Pierre as he withdrew.

"Aha! my fine mistress," he said, as the door closed behind him, "be you so proud, forsooth? Mayhap it will not be long before you will be glad enough to have me speak to you! Aye, and to give me those kisses you make so free with to others!"

"I like not that young man," said mistress Maillart. "Did you hear him mutter under his breath as he went out?"

"Come, wife, the lad is not so much amiss," returned Maillart. "Yet, if you cannot abide him—"

They were interrupted by Pierre himself, who returned to say that a messenger was below.

.... "Who is it?" asked the merchant.

"He says that he comes from the Provost, master."

"Open the door then, Pierre, and show him the way hither."

A moment later the messenger appeared, and after saluting mistress Maillart and Jeanne, said that he was sent by the Provost, to ask whether master Maillart could go to his house, as he wished to see him upon business of importance. He answered that he would go immediately, and taking leave of his wife and kissing Jeanne, he followed the messenger to the shop below, and desiring Pierre to light a torch the three were soon upon their way. Arrived at the Provost's house, Maillart ordered Pierre to wait, and the fellow who had taken the message, after admitting the merchant to the Provost's room, retired with Pierre with whom he seemed to be well acquainted.

Marcel greeted Maillart cordially, saying, "Friend François, I hope you will not take it ill that I sent for you instead of going to your house; but I feared we would be interrupted there, and I have much to talk of with you: tell me, François, how does mistress Maillart, and is little Jeanne as pretty as ever? it is long since I have seen them."

"You know that you are always welcome at my house, Etienne," replied the merchant, "but of late you seem to have forgotten your old friends."

"No, François, yet it is true that cares have pressed upon me and I have but little time to spend in friendly visits; but," he continued, sighing, "the public business presses heavily upon me and the people look to me to give them cheap bread. My God! how unreasonable they are! As though I could do such a thing; I, who am but a man, and no worker of miracles!"

"Can you not show them how foolish such demands are, Etienne?"

"I do, I have, François, but they will not listen, and say: 'Well, then, if you cannot make food plenty and cheap, at least give us permission to go and take it.'"

"What do they mean?" asked Maillart looking keenly at the Provost. "What do they mean by taking it? would they break into the shops of honest bakers? would they force their way into the houses of thrifty citizens and take what these have earned by their industry? and if they did this, would it be of service to them? They would live in plenty a week, a month, and then would be more miserable than before! is it not so?"

"Yes, François, I do not deny it, but this is not what they want: they have no quarrel with honest merchants; they do not wish them any harm."

"How then can they get bread without work," said Maillart, "for these idle crowds that rove the streets and raise such a clamor are not fond of honest labor."

The Provost hesitated a moment; he saw that his companion did not or would not understand him, and meant to force him to speak more plainly: then he said, "François, we are old friends, and I asked you to come hither to-night, because I know you are a man of sound judgment, and one who speaks the truth; you are very popular among the merchants, too, and know the feeling that exists among them. I mean to confide in you, and tell you plainly that the people demand that I should allow them to give assistance to the peasants. They say they are dying of hunger, and that since the peasants have risen, they may as well join them, and have a share in the spoils of the nobles; they urge me

to open the gate and let them go forth and join Guillaume Callet. Now, François, tell me your opinion."

"First, tell me whether this is all they ask," said the wine-merchant.

"All! what do you mean, François?"

"Do they not ask you also to open the gates that the peasants may come in?" continued Maillart.

Marcel's eyes fell before the steady look of the merchant. "And if they do," he said slowly, "what then, François, what harm could they accomplish?"

"Do you ask such a question, Etienne? what harm! such, forsooth, as they are doing now in the country: robbery, outrage, murder!"

"You are too timid," said Marcel, "these poor people would not injure their friends."

"Etienne Marcel," said Maillart earnestly, "you deceive yourself; for I would be loth to believe that you would willingly give the city over to a band of wolves who would raven and destroy as they listed. You have asked me to tell you the truth, and I say now to you, Etienne, that if you send aid to Callet, if you allow the peasants to enter the city, you will estrange every good and loyal citizen from you. Do not think they will tamely submit to be robbed and murdered, do not think they will allow you, Provost though you be, to admit this drove of wild beasts! You asked my opinion, I have given it."

Marcel listened attentively, but a flush spread over his face at these plain words: he was evidently offended, though he strove to conceal it as he answered: "You make too much of this, François, and I thought you had more confidence in me. What, do you suppose I would

do aught injurious to the city? you should know me better."

"I have always defended you when men spoke ill of you, Etienne. I am not given to suspicion, but I would gladly have you assure me that you do not think seriously of this."

"Have no fear, François," said the Provost, rising and laying his hand familiarly on Maillart's shoulder. "So, then I have enemies! and what evil do they say of me, old friend?"

"I like not to repeat it, Etienne, but they say that you receive messengers from the king of Navarre."

The Provost started, but controlled himself as he replied. "And what harm in that, François? I receive messengers from many others also."

"Aye, but it is whispered that you would fain deliver Paris up to the king."

Marcel's face changed at hearing himself abruptly charged with a design that he supposed to be a profound secret, and for a moment he was at a loss for a reply. His change of feature and hesitation were not lost upon Maillart, who sighed as he took the hand of the Provost.

"Ah, Etienne," he said, "be careful; do not rashly throw away the esteem of all thy friends, of all good men. Draw back while there is yet time; do not let false ambition and pride hurry thee forward to certain destruction."

Marcel, who had by this time recovered his self-possession, answered with a smile,—“But, old friend, thou must not heed these lying tales: believe them not I say, but trust me; no citizen has the good of Paris more at heart than I. Do not dream that I would do anything so foolish or so rash as thou hast said. Look not so

sober, François, believe thy old friend. Aha ! I like to see thee smile again ! Well, I am beholden to you for your good advice, and will follow it. Kiss pretty mistress Jeanne for me, François, and say to your wife that I shall go soon to crush a cup of her good mulled wine with you."

Maillart then took his leave, and calling Pierre to fetch his torch, proceeded homeward. As he walked along he reflected upon the conversation he had just held with Marcel. He was very unwilling to believe that the latter harbored treasonable designs, but his conduct forced him to that conclusion, and he was not deceived by his protestations ; for he had not failed to observe his embarrassment when told that he was suspected of a correspondence with the king of Navarre. He reluctantly admitted to himself that the Provost's actions had not been those of an innocent man, and he felt certain that he had not been entirely truthful.

It was with sincere regret that he found his former friend so changed. "It is the admiration of the rabble," he said to himself, "that has intoxicated him : he has lost his head, and perhaps he even dreams of following the example of Van Arteveld. Surely, Etienne must have lost his senses if he thinks he will be able to restrain this turbulent mob, and upon what else can he rely, if he really means to prove a traitor ; not upon good citizens, and the nobles hate him. Yes : he is lost if he pursues this course, for the peasants will be crushed. Even the king of Navarre would join his cousin the Regent long enough to destroy them, and after this is done, the nobles will turn upon Etienne, and nothing can save him. Well, I have warned him, and if he persists in this folly, his ruin must be on his own head."

Such were the thoughts of the honest wine-merchant as he followed Pierre through streets where the feeble light of their torch was barely sufficient to prevent their stumbling over heaps of stones and rubbish that obstructed the way, or from falling into the pools of stagnant water that were more frequent than pleasant. They were occasionally met by some of the Provost's watch, which partially patrolled the city, or by a band of students swaggering along in search of the adventures they delighted in; and woe to the unfortunate citizen who failed to make way for them. It was an easy task for them to seize and strip him, and after ducking or beating the poor wretch, to dismiss him with a quantity of good advice, and numerous admonitions to remember and respect the privileges of the students of Paris. Maillart however had learned by long experience not to oppose these gentlemen, and whenever a group of them appeared, he instructed Pierre to wait quietly until they passed by, and to pay no attention to their rude badinage, and thus they reached their own door in safety, a thing to be thankful for by any one obliged to be abroad at night in the streets of Paris, in the year of grace, 1358.

CHAPTER V.

THE more he reflected upon his interview with Marcel the more uneasy did Maillart become ; and he finally determined to call together some of his friends and consult with them in regard to taking some steps to restrain the Provost ; but before doing this, he wished to inform the count de la Roche of his intention. Upon the first opportunity, therefore, he set out for the Cerf Blanc, and having reached the rue St. Denis was about to turn toward the quay when he was startled by hearing the clash of swords, and by perceiving at a short distance in front of him, two noblemen engaged in a desperate struggle. As he came up one of them received a thrust in the shoulder and fell ; when his antagonist, sheathing his sword, turned about and disappeared. Such duels were so frequent that they attracted but little attention, and those who passed by merely glanced carelessly at the fallen man, not stopping to ask whether he required assistance or was dead. Maillart however impelled by curiosity or by a feeling of humanity, paused, and seeing that the man had fainted only, was bending over him uncertain what to do, when to his surprise he saw count Guy coming toward the spot, followed by Lanard.

"I am glad to see you, my lord," said the merchant, rising, "for here is a gentleman badly hurt I fear. I was on my way to your lodging when I saw him fall."

"I think he has fainted," said the count, glancing at the wounded man ; and then looking more attentively

he exclaimed: "By Heaven! it is d'Ervand. Here, Lanard, lift up the vicomte's head while I examine his wound. I do not think the hurt is dangerous," he said, after a moment, "but we must carry him to my lodging and send for a physician immediately."

"My lord," said the wine-merchant, "my house is not far away, and perhaps it would be well to take him there, for my wife is a famous nurse, and I would be glad to be of service to a friend of yours."

"That is kind of you, my worthy sir," rejoined the count, "for the Cerf Blanc is a noisy place and Susanne hath no time to play the nurse; but see, the bleeding has stopped and he begins to open his eyes." In truth the vicomte was recovering from his swoon, and was naturally surprised to see Guy standing over him.

"Ha, Guy," he said faintly, "how came you here and where is the baron? By St. Martin! that was a devilish thrust: am I much hurt, my friend?"

"No, I think not," answered the count. "The sword went into your shoulder, but a surgeon and a good nurse will cure you speedily. Now you must let us lift you, for this kind merchant says we shall take you to his house which is not far away."

As the vicomte was too weak to make any objection to this proposal, they prepared to lift him, but Mailart was so awkward that the wounded youth could not suppress a groan.

While all this was taking place, a few persons had gathered about the spot, and one of them noticing Mailart's clumsy effort to lift the vicomte came forward, saying: "Good master merchant, you are not used to sword thrusts, and know not how to handle a man who has had four inches of cold steel in his shoulder. Let me lift his

head, so!" and suiting the action to the word, he assisted Lanard so skilfully that d'Ervand gave him a look of gratitude. The stranger was a tall, slender fellow with a florid complexion, merry blue eyes and a reddish beard. He wore the dress of a student, and as he and Lanard bore the vicomte carefully toward the merchant's house, he began to talk with the man-at-arms as though he had known him all his life.

Lanard was not slow to respond to the friendly sallies of the good-natured student, and by the time they reached Maillart's house they were in high good humor with each other. Mistress Maillart received the party with good nature, and made the wounded youth as comfortable as possible, while the count despatched Lanard in search of a physician. The student received the thanks of the gentlemen for his timely assistance, and accepted a cup of wine, which he pronounced to be worthy of Bacchus himself. He then accompanied Lanard, whom he promised to guide to the house of a physician of marvelous skill in curing all manner of stabs and slashes. While the two proceeded in search of a physician, the merchant seized the opportunity to talk with the count in regard to his interview with Marcel.

The count approved of his plan, and requested him to acquaint him with the result of his conference with his friends. "If they are willing," he said, "to prove their loyalty, you may tell them that I am empowered by the Regent to take measures to restrain the Provost and guard the city. Impress upon them the necessity of their agreeing upon a definite course of action; tell them that I shall depend upon them alone, and that if they are willing to follow my directions, I have no doubt of being able to foil the designs of the Provost. Let each merchant

count those upon whom he can rely; let lists be made, and let each man answer for a certain number of followers determined to guard the gates, and resist the mob until we can receive assistance from the Regent. You see that I confide in you, master Maillart, and I rely on you to aid me with your influence."

The merchant was astonished to hear the count speak so decidedly and with so much determination, and his reply betrayed the surprise he felt.

"It was a difficult task to entrust to one so young as you, my lord, but I well know the reputation of the marquis de la Rivière, who has given the Regent wise counsel ere this, and I think he was not mistaken in sending you here, though you be so young; such help as I can give shall be freely yours, and in truth what you propose is wise and sensible."

"I trust it will succeed, but indeed the success of this plan depends mostly upon yourself, master Maillart, for it is you who must persuade the citizens to guard their interests and defend the city. No easy thing, I fear."

"Well, my lord," returned Maillart, "we shall see; and as soon as I have news I will send you word."

"Be sure you send a trusty messenger, good Maillart, for if the Provost hears of this, it will only hasten his treachery."

"I will use caution, my lord."

"Very well; let us go now and see how the vicomte is coming on." They found that the physician had arrived and dressed the wounded shoulder which he declared would be as well as ever in a week or two at most. The count then asked his friend how the affair had begun, and who was his antagonist.

"It was the baron de Roye," replied the vicomte.

"You do not know him, Guy, he is a friend of the king of Navarre, and I know not what he is about here in Paris, but could swear it is no good purpose that draws him hither."

"How did your quarrel begin," asked count Guy.

"I must tell you first," said the vicomte, "that the baron de Roye is no friend of mine, though I have met him often at the chateau of Pierrefont, where we sometimes hunted together. He has a fair estate near Soissons, and spends much time in the chase, for he is well versed in all forest craft, and he has a curious knowledge of all kinds of birds, and breeds some of the best sakers and gersfalcons in all France. Well, the baron hath a crafty spirit, and is so passionate, that if he can, he will be openly revenged on any one who does him an affront, but he scruples not to lie in wait for an enemy and take him at unawares; and since he hath entered into such great friendship for Navarre I care not for his company, yet I could not courteously refuse to walk with him after he saluted me: and so we went along together, and began to speak of matters of the chase, and he told me of a young falcon that had stooped on a crane, the like of which he never saw before. And as we were talking thus pleasantly together, and had stopped while he described the falcon's flight, and how he struck his quarry, an old man came up behind us, and was going softly by; but when the baron saw him, he swore a great oath, and darting forward seized him by the neck and began to pull him about and beat him with the hilt of his dagger so that it was a shame to see. I cried out to him to hold his hand, and asked why he beat the old man; and he left off striking him, but still held him fast, while he said to me: 'Tis an old villain who hinders me from seeing the

lady whom I mean to wed, for whenever I seek admittance to her house, this old wizard has her servants make fast the door; but by Heaven! I will fasten a stone about his neck, and my men shall drown him like a dog as he is;’ and he fell to beating him again.”

“Now I recognized the old man, for I had seen him sitting with the lady whom I told you of before.”

“The scornful lady in the house by the river,” said the count.

“Yes, Guy, and although she looked so proudly on me, I thought it would be only worthy of a knight to protect her servant, or her physician, for he looked not altogether like a servant,—and so I bade the baron cease abusing him, for it was shameful to beat a feeble old man. With that he let him go, muttering that although her servant escaped him, yet should not the lady, for he would carry her off by force. Then we both drew our swords, and while we were fighting the old man escaped. I was pressing the baron hard, when my foot slipped and he wounded me.”

“What a villanous thing for the baron to do!” exclaimed the count.”

“It was so,” replied d’Ervand, but I will punish him for it.”

“But you must first get well, Henri, and by my faith, I hope you will do so as fast as possible, for I need your assistance. Do you think,” continued the count, “that de Roye will attempt to carry off the lady as he threatened?”

“I believe he will, Guy, for as I told you he will not scruple to do anything to accomplish his ends.”

“Perhaps I can prevent him,” said the count; “I would be sorry to have so fair a lady fall into his hands against

her will, and if I meet the baron I will avenge you, my dear Vicomte."

"Thank you, Guy; yet be upon your guard, for he is treacherous, and then it may be that he is here to negotiate with the Provost on the part of Navarre."

"Ha!" exclaimed the count. "I thought not of that; but, by Heaven! I must seek him out and discover whether he holds communication with Marcel; for if he doth, by my faith the Provost is a traitor. Now I must leave you, but you will be well cared for here, Vicomte. I have found this Maillart a most worthy man, and have confided my plans to him; you may trust him, and I do not doubt that you will soon learn to esteem him."

"What, Guy, have you made a friend of the wine-merchant? By St. Geneviève! that is droll."

"I am not ashamed of it," returned the count, "and I tell you that you will find him a kind and sensible man; yes, and by my faith, far more intelligent too than most of our nobles."

"I never thought to have heard Guy de la Roche defending the bourgeoisie," said d'Ervand, laughing.

"Never mind, Vicomte, I am much mistaken if before your wound is healed you do not agree with me; but I must stay here no longer or Lanard will wonder what has become of me, and will be searching the streets. So, then, adieu. I leave you to the worthy Maillart—be considerate of his feelings, my dear Henri."

"Yes," replied the vicomte, with a laugh, "I will for your sake."

In the meanwhile Lanard, having despatched the physician to the aid of the wounded vicomte, was in no hurry to return to the inn, and began to stroll about the town in company with his new acquaintance, the student.

Crossing the bridge of Planche Mibrai, they amused themselves by exploring the city ; and the student, whose name was Jean Rolin, proposed to his companion that they should cross to the University. This, however, Lanard declined to do, saying that it would take too much time, and they turned back. As they passed near la Cité palace, Rolin asked the man-at-arms whether he had ever been within the walls.

"No," said Lanard "but it must be a fine place ; I would like well to see it."

"'Tis impossible now," replied Rolin, who then launched forth into a description of the marvels to be seen there—the enormous guard-room, the chambers hung with tapestry, the narrow winding stair-cases that led to the top of the group of round towers before them, the room in which the lord of Dampierre had lived so long the captive of Philip the Fair. Here he was interrupted by Lanard, whose eye was attracted by the graceful spire of the Sainte Chapelle, and who asked whether the interior was as beautiful as one would judge from the delicate open work of the tower. Rolin declared that the pictures which adorned the walls, and the windows of stained glass were a poem, and after telling his companion that within the chapel was preserved our Saviour's crown of thorns, he began to relate some of the legends of the saints whose lives were represented there. Lanard listened attentively, and if he did not place entire confidence in the truth of these tales, he at least appeared to do so. Rolin then led the way to a tavern where they seated themselves, and the student striking his fist upon the table demanded wine. While they drank, Lanard told his new friend that he was staying at the Cerf Blanc, and asked whether he knew the place.

"That I do, comrade," was the reply, "and by the bones of St. Victor! they have good wine at that same inn; but the landlord does not like us of the University, and shuts the door against us."

"Why does he so?" asked Lanard.

"Faith," said the student, laughing, "the knave hath a pretty wife, and is jealous as the devil; you should see him, comrade, when he comes in suddenly, and finds three or four of us jolly fellows drinking to the health of the fair Susanne."

"He likes it not, then, friend Rolin?"

"You are right. Ha, ha! You should have seen him one night when I was there; I was in a merry mood, and Susanne stood so close beside me, that it was the most natural thing in the world for me to put my arm around her; ha, ha! good master Robert looked as black as a thunder-cloud."

"And how about Susanne?"

"O, she cared not, not she," returned Rolin, twisting his beard, "but she pretended to be angry, ha, ha! the hussy will drive Robert mad some day, and yet she is a good-hearted girl, and I think not she would play him false; only she knows she is pretty and likes to be admired."

"That is but natural and I do not blame her for it," said Lanard; "'tis every pretty woman's right you know, comrade, and if Bonel is jealous, the worse for him."

"You and I agree exactly, friend Lanard:

Fair women and fair wine,
We worship at their shrine.

Aha, my noble follower of Mars, will we not twine garlands for all the divinities, but especially for Venus and

Bacchus!" and he began to sing, beating time with his cup upon the table.

The student was certainly a votary of Bacchus, as Lanard began to perceive; for he had not ceased to toss off huge draughts of wine, and one cup succeeded another so fast, as to quite take away the breath of our more temperate man-at-arms. Accordingly he rose and after giving Rolin a hearty invitation to visit him at the Cerf Blanc, left him to finish his carouse alone.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE the vicomte was exchanging blows with the baron de Roye, the old man who had been the innocent cause of their contention, escaped. He made his way slowly along the street, groaning as he went, for the blows he had received had not been light, and he still felt the pressure of the brutal baron's gripe upon his throat. At last he reached a house whose narrow, pointed windows overlooked the Seine: it was massively built of stone, and its low, arched portal was guarded by a heavy oaken door. As the old man dragged himself painfully up to the entrance a head was thrust out of a small window above and as quickly withdrawn.

Immediately after, the door was opened by a servant who assisted the old man to enter, and instantly closed and fastened the door, as though the house was a fortress in a state of siege—and, indeed, it did present that appearance, so thick and strong were the walls, and so forbidding the aspect of the projecting front, that frowned down upon the street as though bidding defiance to the passer-by, instead of offering a hospitable welcome.

The old man no sooner found himself in safety, than, thoroughly exhausted with pain and fright, he sank down upon the stone floor and seemed about to faint. The servant, alarmed to see him in such a condition,—for his neck was black, and his face covered with blood,—was about to call for help, but the other prevented him by a gesture and said faintly: “Do not alarm your lady, I shall

be better in a moment. Bring me some water." Having brought a basin, the servant bathed the face of the injured man, whom he addressed as Master Bertrand, and then helping him to his feet assisted him to gain his own room. "Now leave me, Anton," said Bertrand. "These cuts and bruises are not dangerous, and I can dress them very well; but look to the door, good Anton, and admit no one without first calling me. I must rest, and afterward I will seek the lady Yolande. Do not you alarm your mistress, but tell her that I will wait upon her presently."

After the servant had left him, Bertrand dressed his injuries with a skilful hand, and taking a small flagon from his breast, poured some drops of the liquid it contained into a cup of water, drank it off, and throwing himself upon a couch fell almost immediately into a profound slumber, which lasted for several hours, and from which he awoke feeling much refreshed. "Ah!" he said to himself, "the elixir that Guido gave me has not failed. 'Tis a wonderful recipe, for when the brain is overwrought, or when the straining nerves quiver like needle points, it bringeth sleep, the healer! How well do I remember when Guido first told me of its powers, and I believed not, scoffing at him until we came to unkind words; and in my heat I seized a glass that stood beside me and drank, not knowing that he had secretly dropped some of the elixir in the water. Then it seemed to me I heard a distant sound of murmuring streams, and it soothed me; and anon I heard the singing of the birds in Guido's garden, and I cared no longer to talk, but listened dreamily to the pleasant noises, until they grew more faint and came to me at intervals, and then my lids grew heavy, a strange drowsiness came over me, and I knew no more until I wakened after hours of sleep and saw Guido bend-

ing over me, and heard him ask whether I now believed that his elixir would bring sleep. Then those weeks I spent with him, learning day by day to comprehend and reverence the wisdom he had gathered in those long years which we thought he had spent in idle dreams. Well, I had grace enough to admit my error, and to learn from him some of the secrets he had stolen from the herbs and roots and flowers; yet I fear me much that I am unworthy of my master. Strange, how it all comes back to me to-day," mused the old man. "Strange, how I can almost fancy myself seated again with Guido in his garden by the Arno, listening to the wash of the stream against the wall, breathing the scent of the flowers, watching the lovely cypress trees sway gracefully in the wind, marking the violet and orange and purple hues succeed each other in the evening sky, while we talked of the brief span of life allotted to mankind and how men in their eager greed for gold, their thirst for power, their mad desire to gratify their passions, shortened life, already brief enough. How, giving way to rage and hatred and revenge, they scrupled not to pour out blood in streams, paying no heed to all the pain that filled the world. And then we wondered whether, in the future, men would ever cease their bitter striving with each other and be satisfied to live in peace until God should take away the life he gave. And when the stars came out, we often spoke of them and of their influence; but Guido thought they had no power for good or evil. I held that each man's destiny might be foretold by them. Yes, yes: we differed sometimes, for he said that I was wrong in holding that the blood should be freely let in fevers, and I insisted that if the blood coursed fiercely through the veins it throbbed and burned because it should not be pent up, and sought an outlet. But now,

ah, now I begin to see that I was wrong. It was a pleasant time; I take delight in thinking of those days in Florence. Yet, alas! 'tis many years since then! I hope the flying years have brought me wisdom as well as these deep furrows on my brow and these gray hairs. But truly, I have well-nigh forgotten in my reverie that my lady will expect me. Let me recall my wits, and remember that I must be upon my guard against this baron de Roye. Yes, he is a dangerous man, and I like not to stay here in Paris alone, for I am too old and feeble to defend my lady Yolande against this lord. He is most dishonorable to persecute her as he does, so that she dares not stir abroad and must stay mewed up here in this gloomy place."

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he arranged his dress, then leaving his room, he directed his steps toward the apartment of the lady Yolande, the daughter of the Sire de Coucy.

This nobleman, like many others, had taken advantage of the truce made with the English to return to his castle and attempt to restore order to his domains. While there, he heard of the humiliating position in which the Dauphin Charles was placed by the plots of the king of Navarre and the presumption of the Provost Marcel. The latter had headed the mob that murdered the marshals of Champagne and Normandy, whose authority the king of Navarre disputed, claiming that he himself was the rightful suzerain of the counties of Evreux and Champagne. It had been mortifying enough to Charles to have the Provost release his rebellious cousin of Navarre, but this daring murder was a deeper indignity; so that while he remained in Paris, his situation became daily more unendurable. Upon hearing of the state to which the Dauphin

was thus reduced, the Sire de Coucy summoned his vassals, and gathering a considerable force of men-at-arms, resolved to go to Paris and free Charles from the power of this bold man who dared to dictate to his sovereign.

Before he left Coucy however the Jacquerie had broken out and such dreadful accounts were given of the atrocities of the peasants, that de Coucy feared to leave his daughter at the chateau. He did not know how soon his own peasantry might join the insurgents, and though his castle was one of the strongest in France, and he left it well guarded, he determined to take Yolande with him.

Upon their arrival in Paris he found that the Dauphin had made his escape and therefore concluded to leave his daughter in the city with the physician, Master Bertrand, and a number of well-armed servants, while he followed the Regent, to Meux. He charged Yolande to be guided by Bertrand, who had lived with him for many years, and in whom he had great confidence, treating him more as a friend than a servant. The physician on his part was devotedly attached to the lady Yolande, for she was a mere child when he first entered her father's service, and he had taken delight in directing her education, which was very meagre, perhaps, measured by the standard of the present time, but was nevertheless superior to that enjoyed by most of the noble ladies of the day. She had not always proved a docile pupil, for she was high-spirited and impatient of control, yet she appreciated the efforts of Bertrand and certainly profited by them to some extent. As she grew older she learned to respect and honor the good old physician; to feel a sincere affection for him, and was not ashamed to treat him with the deference due to his age and gentle character. Anton had informed her that Bertrand had come in feel-

ing indisposed, but that when he had recovered from his fatigue he desired to pay his respects to her, and when he entered her apartment he found Yolande expecting him. She was, however, surprised to see him with his face bruised and discolored, and exclaimed, "My dear master, what accident has happened to you? that knave Anton did not tell me that you were hurt."

"It is nothing serious, dear lady," said Bertrand.

"Do not stand, dear master," cried Yolande, "sit down on this couch, while you tell me what has befallen you;" and forcing him to seat himself, she drew up a footstool for herself and said kindly, "Now tell me all about it." He then related his adventure and Yolande was very indignant at the conduct of the baron. "The base knight," she exclaimed, "to maltreat my dear old master thus! Do you know, Bertrand, that I begged my father to bring me with him, because I thought it a good way in which to escape the persecution of the baron de Roye? I feared he would take advantage of my father's absence to visit Coucy and plague me with his attentions."

"He must have discovered that we had come to Paris and followed us here," said Bertrand, "and I know he has been in the city for some time, dear lady, for he sought to visit you, but I ordered Anton to deny him entrance: I hope you are not displeased."

"No, Bertrand, you did quite right, for I think the baron de Roye is a dishonorable knight, and my father likes him not; neither do I know why he presumed to follow us, for I have treated him coldly ever, and especially since I saw him beat his falconer so cruelly, because his favorite bird was sick and would not fly when he unhooded him. The falconer was not to blame; he did not know the bird was sick that day. Oh, I remem-

ber very well the angry look that flushed the baron's face, and how his eyes grew cold and hard ! ”

“ He is a bad man, dear lady, and I am glad he has not deceived you by his false words.”

“ His devotion is so ardent,” replied Yolande, “ that he forgets himself sometimes ; for once he seized my hand when I had dropped my rein, and I was compelled to beg him to release it. No, no, I never liked the baron, but I hate him now for abusing you, my dear master. How villanous to strike you ! how had you injured him, forsooth ? ”

“ He was furious because he said I had forbidden the servants to admit him to the house, and declared that he would have his men drown me for a sorcerer.”

“ He had not dared to be so insolent,” returned Yolande indignantly, “ but that he knew we were alone and unprotected ; but my father will chastise him for it. A sorcerer ! my good old Bertrand a sorcerer ! Saint Mary ! ” she cried, her eyes sparkling with anger, “ I would I could punish him myself ; he should learn that the de Coucys know how to protect the followers of their house ! But how did you escape from him ? you have not told me that.”

He told her what he had seen, but as he made his escape as fast as possible, he could not say what had been the result of the encounter between the baron and the vicomte. However, he described the appearance of the latter so well that Yolande instantly recognized the young noble whom she had often seen walking in front of the house. “ Saint Mary ! ” she said, laughing, “ it is my unknown ! the handsome youth who always salutes me so respectfully when he sees me at the window : I wonder that you did not know him ! ”

"I remember that you pointed him out to me," replied Bertrand, "but sooth to say I was so confused with pain that I did not recognize him."

"I hope he avenged you on the false baron! Truly it was generous and knightly for him to draw his sword to defend you, and I hope some day to give him thanks for it. But is it not time, Bertrand, that we had some news from my father? I am growing weary of this dull house, and you will not allow me to go out."

"It is for fear of the baron. I know not what he dares to do, and it is safer for you to remain at home, dear lady, until your father returns."

"I shall rebel, Bertrand; why, you would have me become a heathen! I have not been to mass this month. I wish," she said rising, and walking about impatiently, "I wish I could cross the river in one of those little boats I often see; would it be dangerous for us to go some evening to la Cité, and attend vespers at Notre Dame?"

"Indeed, dear lady, it would not be safe, for the city is disturbed and the streets are full of reckless men. Your lovely face would attract too much attention from those rough prowlers, and their rude stares would not be pleasant. If it please you to be patient, I hope your noble father will soon return."

"I think I have been patient, good Bertrand; but my patience will not last forever, and if you will not allow me to go to Notre Dame, there can be no harm in my going to St. Jean's to hear mass, so I shall go there to-morrow."

"You will let me go with you then," said Bertrand, "and I will have two stout servants follow us."

"Well, you may arrange it as you please, but I shall go, for I feel like a caged bird here, and cannot endure to be restrained much longer! and so good night, Bertrand."

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER the fall of his antagonist, the baron de Roye turned about and walked to his lodging, where he threw himself upon a seat, and began to reflect on what had taken place. He gave but little thought to the wounded vicomte, although he cursed him for having interfered to prevent him from wreaking his vengeance on Bertrand, whom he justly suspected of having hindered him from seeing the lady Yolande. And it was with the faithful Bertrand that he was most enraged.

"The devil take the old dotard!" he thought; "he thinks to baffle me—ha! we shall see whether he is a match for me. A curse light on him!" he continued angrily. "And now, how shall I pursue my object? It must be while de Coucy is away with the Dauphin, for he will not hear of my suit, and scorns the humble baron de Roye. May the fiend possess me, if the beauty of the lady Yolande hath not maddened me, and I must win her whether de Coucy will or no; but I must think of some means, for this old fool will bar the door against me now more securely than before, and if he tells his mistress how I treated him to-day, 'tis like she will think me some monster of cruelty. I wish the vicomte had held his hand a moment until I had thrown the leech into the Seine. He would then have borne no tales to his lady to poison her mind against me. By St. Peter, if he falls into my hands again he escapeth not so easily!" and the baron grinned

as he thought of the delight he would take in strangling the object of his hatred.

The baron was exceedingly anxious to obtain the hand of so great an heiress as Yolande, and certainly the beauty of the young girl also attracted him in no small degree, as well as a multitude of other suitors from whom offers of marriage had been rejected. But instead of withdrawing when he saw that he was not favorably received, the baron made use of every opportunity to throw himself in the way of Yolande, and endeavored to gain her affection secretly and without her father's knowledge. He adopted this course, partly because the Sire de Coucy was so powerful a noble that he dared not oppose his wishes openly, and also, partly because his suit had been somewhat disdainfully rejected by him, and his nature was so vindictive that he would have rejoiced to wound de Coucy's pride, as he knew he should do, if he succeeded in gaining the love of Yolande, to accomplish which he was ready to make use of fair means or foul. He had hoped to see her frequently in Paris, and was beside himself with rage when he found his efforts baffled by the watchfulness of the old physician, and as he supposed the latter would inform Yolande of the beating he had received, he began to despair of making any progress in his wooing.

Stamping his foot upon the floor, the baron summoned his landlord, whom he ordered to fetch him wine. "And hark ye, knave," said he, "send hither my servant, Philip." While the landlord went upon his errand, the baron fell again into reflection, but after thinking for a few moments he started up exclaiming, "I verily believe I am bewitched by this girl! She must be mine! and why should I not carry her boldly off? I could conceal her, and before her

father could discover her, Navarre will be master of Paris, and perhaps king ; for he is strong enough with the aid of the English to defeat the Dauphin's party. Ha ! then perchance the haughty de Coucy will not despise me, for if Navarre succeeds, I shall stand near him ; yes, I have his confidence more than any other. Ha, ha ! 'tis a happy thought and solves the difficulty ! so simple, too. Why did I not think of it before ; but yet," he added thoughtfully, " that house is not so easily forced : 'tis strong, and the servants are armed. Still she must sometimes go abroad. She would not stay shut up within those stone walls, not she. Soho ! we will watch for them, seize my lady, strangle or drown the leech, and then away ! Aha, my lady Yolande, I have thee now ! " The opening of the door interrupted the baron just as he had in thought accomplished his nefarious project. Seeing that it was the servant whom he had sent for, de Roye ordered him to take two men and place them where they could watch the entrance of the Sire de Coucy's house. Philip asked whether he wished the watch to be set at once.

" No, not to-night, knave," said his master, " it is too late ; but in the morning early—and bid them place themselves where they will be hidden, for the old man is suspicious and will be on his guard. If he comes out alone, bid your men seize him and bring him here, but if the lady is with him let one follow them at a distance, while the other brings me word. Do you mark well what I say, Philip ? "

" Yes, my lord, it shall be done exactly as you have ordered."

" Bid your fellows have a care," continued the baron, " for, by St. Peter ! if they let the game slip, they shall lose their ears ! "

Philip assured his master that the men should know the

penalty that awaited them in case of failure, and withdrew, while the baron, remembering that he had that day received a commission from the king of Navarre to the Provost, wrapped himself in his cloak, and leaving the tavern, directed his steps toward Marcel's house.

CHAPTER VIII.

ETIENNE MARCEL now found himself surrounded by difficulties which increased daily.

Offended as he was by the plain words of the wine-merchant, he could not but admit their truth, and began to be alarmed at the situation in which he was placed. Soon after the breaking out of the peasant insurrection he had entered into correspondence with Guillaume Callet, and promised him aid in his attacks upon the nobles. He had done this soon after the Regent made his escape from Paris where he wished to detain him, and at a moment when he saw no other means of saving himself from the resentment of Charles than by assisting Callet and thus encouraging him in the helot war he was waging.

He knew the Dauphin could not attempt anything against himself until he had first destroyed the peasants, for the nobles would not serve against another enemy until they had wreaked their vengeance upon those savage desolaters of their homes. Marcel therefore held out promises to Callet, while he delayed an open declaration in his favor. In truth he was surprised at his success, and when he received a message from him urging him to keep the promises he had made, he hesitated as to his course. He felt that he might have made his peace with the Dauphin if he had boldly declared against the rebels, but it was then too late to retrace his steps, for the mob clamored for permission to share in the

plunder of the nobles ; the honest citizens began to distrust him and it would be hard to regain their confidence, and no middle course was possible, for only an immediate proof of loyalty could obtain pardon for the insults he had heaped upon the Dauphin. If he could crush the Jacquerie at a blow, so signal a service would perhaps save him, but should he make the attempt and fail, his fate was sealed ; complete success might save him, less would but hasten his ruin.

One hope remained for him. The king of Navarre might raise a party powerful enough, when joined with his own, to accomplish the treachery they meditated : to overthrow the Dauphin Charles and place the crown on his cousin's head. These thoughts engrossed his mind as the Provost sat at his table. His brow was wrinkled and his hands twitched nervously, as he reflected upon the necessity of deciding immediately, for Callet's messenger was awaiting his reply, and that evening must decide whether he would become an open traitor. While he was thinking thus, his servant announced the arrival of the baron de Roye. Marcel rose to receive him, and made an effort to banish the anxiety which nevertheless was visible upon his face.

"Well, Master Provost," said the baron, flinging himself into a seat, "how do our affairs come forward?"

"Very well, my lord."

"And when will you deliver up the keys to the king of Navarre?"

"As soon," replied Marcel, "as he is able to maintain the war against the Regent ; but I have heard no news of him of late. Is he gathering strength, my lord?"

"Yes, in Normandy and from over sea, and he sends

you word to be prepared, for he may arrive suddenly. Are you sure of the city, Master Provost ? ”

“ All is quiet, and the citizens are devoted to me,” rejoined Marcel ; “ have no fear, Paris will be for the king of Navarre.”

“ Say you so ? I am glad to hear it, Provost, but they say that the Dauphin hath friends here who seek to undermine you. Know you anything of this ? ”

“ Do not believe it, my lord.”

“ I suppose the citizens bear you much love for what you did for them in the States-General,” continued the baron ; “ and the trades, how are they affected, have you influence with them ? ”

“ They follow my nod, my lord, for they hate the nobles roundly, and have not forgotten that I obtained privileges for them, as well as for the merchants. I hope,” Marcel went on, “ that my lord of Navarre doth not forget that I was of service to him also.”

“ Ha ! Master Provost, do you remind him of a service as of a favor done ? By the saints ! ” then, recollecting himself the baron proceeded in a more friendly tone : “ Yes, by St. Peter ! you did my lord good service, Provost, and the noble marshals did not long enjoy their dignities. Ha, ha ! it was well done of you, and Navarre will not forget it ! Trust me, he will reward you when he is king.”

“ I hope he will remember that I put my life in danger for him.”

“ Doubt it not, Provost, you will not fail to have a seigniorship in Champagne or Normandy, when the Prince is crowned : and by my faith, he asked me to tell you this, and to say that he hath much confidence in you and

will give you proof of it, so you but hold Paris for him. But methinks you are down-hearted to-night, Provost."

"No, my lord," replied Marcel, forcing a smile, "but I am weary and perplexed by business. You know that since these troubles trade stands still, the people press me to give them food, and there is much hunger here in Paris."

"God's truth! the people are keen set and grow restless! 'Tis like they would not be sorry to change masters, and would welcome Navarre; is it not so?"

"Yes," answered Marcel, "so he would give them bread."

"By St. Peter! if that be all they ask, they shall have bread, Provost."

"I hope so, my lord, for they say that they are starving. But how long will it be before the Prince can gather all his force? Tell him, my lord, that it were well for him to hasten; delay is dangerous, and the time is good for our attempt; it could not be more favorable than now when the Regent is fighting with the peasants, and if we fall upon him we will be successful."

"Think you so, Provost? by St. Peter, your advice is good! and truly I think the king means to come hither speedily; he bids you be upon your guard, for when he reaches Paris you must act suddenly."

Marcel assured the baron that the moment the king arrived with a large enough force to make head against his cousin, he would deliver up the keys and place the city in his hands.

The baron de Roye then rose, and placing his hand familiarly on the Provost's shoulder said: "Forget not the fair seigniory that awaits thee—and so, adieu, Master Marcel."

Somewhat reassured by the manner of the baron, and by the news he had brought, Marcel now resolved to keep the promise he had so imprudently made to Callet. He would send him aid, and by so doing prolong the struggle of the peasants, and gain time. He thought it would be safer to trust entirely to the king of Navarre, than to abandon his cause and attempt a reconciliation with the Regent. It was a desperate resolution, for he thus openly avowed himself a traitor, and he was well aware that he also alienated from himself a strong party of loyal citizens like Maillart, and would be forced to rely upon a few of the trades and upon the support of the mob; still he thought the latter would be strong enough to protect, and enable him to carry out his designs.

"I will run the risk," he said to himself. "If James Van Arteveld could master and sway the communes of Ghent, why may I not keep the power I have,—aye, and increase it until I prove that a common man knows how to rule as well as a noble? If the king of Navarre will agree to my terms, well. If not, I will make Paris a free city and hold it against all." Thus he reasoned as he paced his room, dreaming of things impossible to accomplish, and forgetting how different were the conditions and resources at his command, from those of which Van Arteveld had availed himself; forgetting also the unhappy fate of the latter who had fancied (with far more reason for his delusion than he) that the people could resist their masters and achieve their independence. It was a dream that was to be rudely dispelled in Flanders, and in France was soon to be extinguished in torrents of blood.

Who can tell whether the thoughts that filled the mind of Etienne Marcel that night were those of a patriot—

whether he really desired to have Paris and France shake off the fetters that bound them, and arise clothed in the garments of freedom, or whether the lust of power had seized and fascinated him ?

Who can say whether his good angel stood beside him and whispered, "Beware ! this task is not for thee !" and, touching his eyes, pointed with warning gesture to the bridge that spanned the years and stretched away into the misty future. Did he see before him that shadowy bridge that marked (arch after arch) the coming ages of dire oppression, sorrow, pain, the centuries that must come and go before his dream could be realized ? But if his good angel gave him to see this vision, he heeded it not, but obeyed the evil demon, as did the wild huntsman at whose side—

" Earnest the right hand stronger pleads,
The left still cheering on the prey !"

His lips were firmly set, as he went to the door and ordered his servant to send in the peasant who was waiting. In a moment the envoy of Guillaume Callet made his appearance, and we recognize Jacques whom we last saw in the forest hut, drinking with Callet after the murder of their prisoners. The ferocious peasant was not awed by the presence of the city magistrate, but advanced with an air of reckless assurance and stood before him, running the fingers of his broad hand through his hair, while he asked in a loud voice and without waiting to be questioned— "Well, master, what answer am I to take back to Guillaume ? you have kept me waiting long enough, I trow !"

"Say to him" replied Marcel, "that I will send a force of men to his assistance."

"But how soon then? By the devil! master, if you mean to join us, you had best do so at once, for Guillaume is tired of your promises, and swears that if you fail us now, he will cut off the hand of every citizen who shows his face outside of Paris!"

"I intend to keep my promise, fellow," said Marcel.

"Well, it is time for you to begin; you have put us off long enough, master, so decide and name a time when your men will join us, but by the devil let it be soon, for we need all the strong hands we can get to help us tear down the walls of Meux."

"Does Callet mean to attack the town?" asked Marcel.

"Have I not said so?" rejoined Jacques, roughly. "Yes he does, and we mean to take it: so will you help us in time, or not?"

"Yes, you can say to Callet that I will send a party to aid him in a few days. Is that all you want to ask?"

Jacques grinned savagely as he answered, "Yes, that is all, but if you forget your promise, master, it will be worse for you."

"No threats, fellow," said the Provost, "you have your answer; now go," and he turned his back upon the peasant who lingered a moment and then went out muttering to himself,—*"Is it all? Yes, all now, master, but by the devil's horns, if we once get into Paris, you will see whether it be all! Ho, ho! there would be rare picking here!"*

Marcel seated himself, relieved to be rid of his unwelcome visitor, whose rough manners and threats he did not much relish.

He had, however, now committed himself, and felt a sense of relief at having done so: he was fatigued and was about to seek his bed, when he was again disturbed

by the opening door, which admitted another claimant upon his time. The pale blue eyes, colorless hair, and flat nose of the intruder certainly belong to the servant of the wine-merchant, and it will be necessary to explain what could bring Pierre Gilles to the Provost's house at so late an hour. We already know that Pierre was no favorite with Mistress Maillart, and although the good merchant himself was inclined to treat the youth most kindly, he could not help seeing that he sought the society of those who could not fail to do him harm; for he had of late begun to spend his evenings from home, and his absences became so frequent that Maillart was compelled to remonstrate with him. Pierre had answered insolently, and though his master took no notice of it at the time, he resolved to follow the advice of his wife and dismiss him as soon as possible.

One evening, however, when Jeanne had occasion to go into the shop, Pierre took the opportunity to speak to her, and receiving a pleasant reply, grew bolder and ventured to tell her that he loved her. She was not so much astonished as annoyed at this declaration; but when he attempted to embrace her, she repulsed him with all her strength. He then seized her hand and would have detained her forcibly, but Jeanne, who had a spirit of her own, snatched away her hand and dealing him a blow upon the face, darted up the stairs, where she told her mother what had occurred. Maillart was not at home, but as soon as he returned his wife insisted that he should rid himself of Pierre at once. However, he had not waited to be dismissed, but had already taken his departure, so that his master was spared the necessity of turning him adrift.

When Pierre entered the wine-merchant's service, and

began to make acquaintances, he sought them among the members or apprentices of the trades that he had been familiar with when a young boy, and particularly among the butchers, as was natural, for his father had belonged to that guild at Ghent, and had been killed in one of the bloody affrays so common there. It was to the butchers then, that Pierre betook himself, burning with rage against the whole family of the wine-merchant, who had always treated him kindly, and whom he wished to repay with ingratitude and injury.

Among his friends the butchers he had acquired some influence, for he was shrewd and cunning, and remembered enough about the power of guilds of his native city to infuse into the minds of the butchers a desire to increase their own, which was already considerable.

They had sent Pierre several times to the Provost, whose staunch supporters they were, and he acquitted himself so well that he became their regular envoy, and was fast becoming their leader. When Marcel saw him, he inquired impatiently, what he wanted at so late an hour. "I am wearied and need rest," he said, "so tell me quickly what brings you here."

"We wish to know whether you will allow us to join the peasants before Meux," answered Pierre. "We will furnish nigh two hundred men if it please you to let us go."

"Let the butchers have their men in readiness, and I will send some stout fellows along with them. I suppose you are all anxious to share in the booty of Meux, Pierre."

"Yes, so please you, master."

"Well, you shall do so, lad, unless the peasants hinder you."

"Trust us for keeping what we seize," said Pierre.

"But you will let us know when you are ready to have us march?"

"Yes, and it will be in a few days; so keep yourselves prepared," replied Marcel. "Now leave me, Pierre, and tell your fellows what I say."

Pierre debated whether he should tell the Provost that he suspected his former master of sympathy with the nobles, but concluded not to do so, lest it should interfere with a plan he had formed to be revenged upon him; and besides he had no reason for this suspicion beyond the fact of Maillart's having taken home the wounded vicomte. The lack of proof, however, would not have prevented his seeking to injure the good wine-merchant, had he not thought he could accomplish his revenge in a surer way. So keeping his own counsel, he saluted the Provost, who bade his servant fasten the door, and admit no one more that night.

CHAPTER IX.

COUNT GUY began to find his stay in Paris very irksome, for he had few acquaintances there beside the vicomte d'Ervand, who was lying wounded at the house of the wine-merchant. He had found the latter worthy of his respect and esteem, but although the young noble might have laid aside the prejudices of his rank, yet Maillart did not allow him to forget the barrier between them, and always treated him with deference, not venturing upon any familiarity which he thought would be improper in one of his condition. Their intercourse then was necessarily confined to what related to the serious enterprise in which both were engaged, and it was natural for the count to long for some society. He found it dull as he sat alone, and heard the shouts of laughter that reached him from the rooms below, where Lanard was entertaining Rolin and some other students whom he had not scrupled to bring along with him. When he made his appearance with his companions Bonel was inclined to regret that he had promised to admit them; and when he recognized in Rolin the red-bearded student who had made love to his wife, he actually shut the door in their faces and secured it carefully, while he hastened to the apartment of the count and told his grievance.

"Master Lanard told me," said he, "that there would be only one, and here be six of these scholars, and that red-bearded villain at their head. The Holy Virgin knows I dare not let them in, my lord!"

"Where are they now?" asked Guy, laughing.

"Outside the door, my lord. Hark! they have already begun to beat it down!" he exclaimed, as a thundering blow fell on the oaken panels, and a strong voice chanted:

"Good master host, we wait below,"

Then the six powerful voices shouted in unison.

"For the devil to fetch thee, hollo! hollo!"

Each hollo was accompanied by a tremendous thump from the clubs, and receiving no response, they began to repeat the summons, and with raised clubs were just about to commence the somewhat imperative chorus, when Robert thrust his head out of the window and cried, "For the love of God, have a little patience! I am coming instantly."

The count followed Bonel to the window, and was much amused at the sight of the six clubs that so alarmed his host. "I will tell Lanard to try and restrain these fellows," he said, "and go you and let them in, my good Robert. I will be responsible if they do any damage while they are inside, but not if they beat down your house because you keep them locked out, and look you, Robert, if Susanne does not wait upon them, I think you can keep them within bounds."

"Susanne shall not come near them, my lord! I will wait on them myself. Holy Virgin! they are beginning again."

"Make haste then and let them in," returned the count, smiling at Robert's dismay. "Ah! here is Lanard. Well, my good fellow, you have noisy guests!"

"I only asked master Rolin, my lord; shall I send the others away?"

"Why no, that would scarce be hospitable, Lanard. You will have a merry evening. Do not forget to discover whether some of these students would follow me if I should need them."

"I will remember, my lord."

"Very well, you may go now, and see that you reconcile Bonel with master Red Beard, whom he vowed he would strangle on the first opportunity."

"I hardly think he will keep his oath to-night, my lord," said Lanard, who then hastened down the stairs to find Bonel undoing the chain, but so slowly that his visitors thought proper to stimulate his efforts by various sarcasms to which however he paid no attention.

The door was finally opened and they strode in, each one greeting Robert with an ironical allusion to his hospitality.

Bonel presently left the room to make some preparations for supper, and Lanard took advantage of his absence, to tell Rolin that the kiss he had given Susanne still rankled in the memory of the jealous fellow, and that he had better invent some apology for his conduct. The student was quick enough to take the hint, and when Bonel returned he went up to him and clapping him on the shoulder held out his hand.

Robert regarded him with a far from friendly look, and did not grasp the outstretched hand; but Lanard interposed, for he saw that the object he had in view would not be promoted by a disagreeable scene.

"Come, Master Bonel," he said, "do you not see that master Rolin wants to make friends with you? Take his hand, for he is a good fellow, and never bear malice for

what he did when he had drank more wine than was good for him ! After all, a man would be a saint an he took not pleasure in the black eyes of mistress Susanne. So blame him not too harshly, and I warrant you, Bonel, he would not have dared to steal that kiss had you been by ! ”

“ No, by the Virgin ! I had broken his head,” growled Robert.

“ I believe you,” said Rolin, good naturedly, “ an I had a pretty wife I should feel as you do, and friend Lanard speaks truth, for by the gods, I had not been so bold had you been here ! Come, you look like a brave fellow, and no milksop willing to have any man make love to his wife, because he dares not fight.”

“ Ha ! ” rejoined Robert, “ any man who makes love to Susanne shall have to deal with me ! ”

“ Soho ! that is right ; the devil take all cowards I say ! but bear me not ill will for that slip, good Master Robert, for you see it was your good wine that made me so forward that night, and the devil take me, if I am not sorry for it ! so give me your hand in friendship. Never believe me, Master Robert, if you keep not the best wine here of any hostelry in Paris. By Bacchus ! I remember the fragrance of it, and how it slips down your throat like oil ! ”

Robert’s wrath was somewhat appeased by this apology, and by the compliment to his wine, and he now bestirred himself to make his guests comfortable.

When supper was ready they all sat down, and were waited upon by two boys, for Robert would not allow Susanne to appear, and all insisted upon his supping with them. Lanard knew that after the liquor began to go round, it would be impossible to have any serious

conversation. So while his guests were busily employed in satisfying appetites which almost justified Bonel's metaphor of the mill hopper, he began to speak about the peasant war, for he wanted to discover whether the students felt any sympathy for Callet and his followers. He found that they condemned the excesses of the peasants in no measured terms, and when he hinted that he had been told that the Provost meant to open the gates and let them enter Paris, he aroused a storm of indignation.

"You would not like to have the peasant Callet in your chair of theology, then," he said, laughing.

"Hold, comrade," cried Rolin, "do not make merry on such a subject!"

"But," persisted Lanard, "what would you do if Callet should bring his band into Paris?"

"But 'tis impossible!"

"How then impossible?"

"Why, the walls are too strong, and too well guarded. You are crazy, comrade, for unless the peasants are like fishes, and can dive under the chains that cross the river, they must e'en stay without the walls."

"But," said Lanard, "the gates might be opened for them if there were traitors within, and then you would have an opportunity to listen to lectures from two new professors, comrades."

"Who then?" asked Rolin, laughing.

"Guillaume Callet and the bloody Jacques: tell me, friend, whether you would like it."

"I warrant you we would like it about as well," replied Rolin, "as the merchants would to have their shops plundered and burnt; or as master Robert here to have his good wine drunk by beasts who would pay him for it by

burning down the Cerf Blanc, cutting his throat and carrying off Susanne."

"Holy Virgin! what are you saying?" exclaimed Bonel, "these peasants can never get into Paris!"

"Would you fight to keep them out, Robert?"

"That I would, Master Lanard."

"And would you, Rolin?"

"Yes, by St. Geneviève!" replied the student; "and so would every man at the University; but there will be no need, comrade, and if there be, we know how to use sword and dagger to defend ourselves. How came we to talk of such folly, friend Lanard?"

"'Tis not such folly as you think, Rolin, but we will talk of it again: let us drink now."

"With all my heart!" and, glancing slyly at Robert, "here's to the black eyes of our pretty hostess!"

Lanard laughed. "Have a care, Rolin," said he.

"What a malicious demon is this same jealousy," returned the student. "Do but look at Bonel now: is he not a picture of content and happiness? and yet if one but say a civil word to his wife, the green-eyed devil that inhabits his breast turns the sociable companion into a suspicious husband. Do you ever feel yourself growing jealous, friend? No? Well, an you do, strangle the devil before he tears your heart out with his poisonous claws!"

"Or drown him, Rolin!"

"Yes, whelm him in floods of wine. Ha, ha! I think my friend yonder must have tried that remedy and whelmed himself, for see, he is getting up. Soho, by St. Geneviève! he's going to speak. And his voice is stronger than his legs," said Lanard laughing, as he watched one of the students mount upon his bench, and support himself against

the wall with one hand, while with the other he made a comical, half drunken gesture to demand attention.

"Reverend sirs and masters," he began gravely, "I will now prove conclusively that the soul is separate and distinct from the body!"

This announcement was received with applause, and shouts of, "Oh, oh! the chaplain! where is your white surplice, Mr. Theologian?" "Look at his solemn face! one would take him for the Dean of St. Victor!" "Or a father confessor!" "Or a parish priest in a tavern! Soho there, thou long-faced imp of wisdom, tell us the difference between a master of arts and the devil! Why, know you not that the first wears a red cape, and the other a black? Hollo then, will you not answer? Well, speak and be hanged, obstinate mule. Hark! hark!"

The student bore this abuse with drunken composure.

"I will not be interrupted," he said, with an attempt at dignity that was not very successful, "keep silence, there, ye unruly fellows! Now," he went on, "some say the soul is in the blood, and some say it is the brain, and others, the heart or such like folly; but I say it is none of these," and he stamped his foot upon the bench, nearly losing his balance as he did so. A roar of laughter saluted his desperate efforts to steady himself, but he was allowed to continue his address. "Where was I?" then he muttered to himself. "Aha! the soul! Yes, I tell you, sirs, the soul is that which loves and hates, and suffers and enjoys, but whence it comes, and whither it goes we know not, nor whether it be large or small. But this we know: that sometimes it abides within us and at other times is absent. When we dream, it is our soul that sits beside us and whispers in our ears pleasant or frightful things; when we sleep and do not dream, the soul has gone, and we wake not until it comes

again ; but if it comes not, then we do not wake, and our body is dead. Thus the soul doth not depend upon the body, but the body upon the soul." Here the liquor began to confuse his thoughts and he stopped, but after a moment began again, hesitating and stammering. "Yes, truly it must be, for how, my masters, and what saith Albertus of the soul?—Give me a cup of wine."

Stamping of feet and laughter greeted this abrupt close of his lecture, which he sought in vain to renew, for they would not listen ; and after standing for some time waving his empty cup he was fain to sink down upon his bench, where he continued muttering his theory in regard to the soul. A dispute now arose between two of the students, one defending the system of the Realists, while the other argued in favor of the philosophy of Occam, which had been prohibited by the University some years before ; and from words they would have come to blows, but Rolin saw the approaching storm, and striking a sounding blow upon the table, cried out, "Soho there, comrades ! keep peace and shame us not by brawling here where we are guests ! What care we whether there be three bodies in the Holy Trinity, or whether all be blended in one : 'tis a mystery beyond us, and if so many learned doctors could ne'er solve it, how should we who understand it not ? My faith ! why should we perplex our brains with questions so involved and intricate. If you must needs dispute, follow the Lullian art, but leave such subjects as the God-head, and profane them not with lips still wet with wine. What profit is it for you to hurl heretic in each other's teeth ? By the shade of Abelard ! ye remind me of the ass who thrust his head between two bundles of good fodder, and still went hungry, knowing not how to choose ; for ye sit between the white wine and the red and do not

drink ! Fye, comrades, leave disputes to the Sorbonne !
Brim your cups and keep good fellowship ! ”

His companions looked somewhat ashamed, and hastened to follow this good advice, by pledging each other, and Bonel who had listened to all this without in the least understanding it, now began to sing while the others falling into the humor joined in the chorus. Lanard then related some stories and adventures, for he was a capital hand at a story, nor did he forget in the interval of tale or song, to send around the liquor, so that the walls of the *Cerf Blanc* rang again with the shouts of mirth that arose from the party, and all were in the highest good humor, with the exception of the student who had succumbed to the fumes of wine, after his unlucky speech upon the soul.

His comrades departed finally, carrying this weak brother, but before they went they declared that Lanard and Bonel were the best fellows in the world, and that they were beholden to them for a jolly entertainment.

Meanwhile, it may be imagined that count Guy found it impossible to sleep, and he paced his room, stopping now and then to listen to the noise of the revelry below. A feeling of loneliness came over him, and he half resolved to go down and drink a cup of wine with the boisterous company ; but he remembered that his presence would be a restraint upon them, and so abandoned the idea. Flinging open the window he looked out, but there was nothing cheering in the prospect, for a drizzling rain had set in and it was pitch dark. Occasionally the uncertain light of a torch could be seen flickering in the distance : from the eaves of the houses across the narrow street, came the monotonous drip of the water as it fell upon the stones ; and at intervals he heard the step of

some belated passer-by, or the voice of a watchman, calling the hour.

He turned away and seating himself took refuge in thought. He had heard nothing from the marquis de la Rivière, or from Rigaud whom he had left at Poissy. Only vague rumors reached him of the progress made by the Jacquier, but these rumors were frightful enough to make him uneasy, and to prove that the nobles had not yet suppressed the rising. The uncertainty of his position irritated him, for he was involving himself in a web of intrigue that was far from agreeable, and yet he saw no other means of fulfilling the mission entrusted to him, and he had followed the advice of the marquis, whose experience had doubtless taught him the best policy to pursue. Certainly he had reason to congratulate himself upon his success up to this point, and he felt very grateful to Mailart, who had relieved him of the details of a disagreeable duty. If the latter could secure the assistance of his brother merchants, and Lanard could persuade a party of students to join them, Guy saw that he might succeed in his aim, and he would soon know whether he could depend upon these allies : if not, he reflected that it was more than useless for him to remain ; he would send a messenger to Poissy, order Rigaud to meet him and then lead his troop to the Dauphin's camp. Having resolved upon this, he began to wonder whether the vicomte d'Ervand would be able to leave the city with him. This thought suggested the occasion of his wound, and recalled the day when his friend had pointed out the lady at the window. Our thoughts are strangely logical sometimes, and move in sequences : perhaps they always do so, and if we fancy otherwise, it is because thought is too swift to register upon the brain the milestones that it passes in its flight.

However this may be, Guy's thoughts retraced step by step the path that led them to the house beside the Seine, and to the window where he had caught a glimpse of the fair face of lady Yolande.

The one glance he obtained had been of eyes deep violet in color,—eyes that seemed to him as pure as wild flowers with the dew upon them, as full of sunshine as the stream that flowed sparkling past the walls of his chateau: in thought they appeared to him the loveliest eyes he ever looked upon, and he fell to wondering what the face was like.

Then suddenly remembering the threat of the baron de Roye, he started to his feet as though to defend some one dear to him, but threw himself down again with a laugh at his folly, and resolved to banish his fancies. But they clung to him in spite of his resolution, and finding that he could not shake them off, he abandoned himself to their pleasant illusion, hoping thus to escape from the loneliness that so oppressed him.

He succeeded easily in this, for his mind was well stored with tales of knightly deeds, of wild adventures, and of desperate risks incurred by errant chevaliers.

He forgot the dismal rainy night and his own perplexities, while he wove his airy castles, peopling them with creatures of his fancy who were grave or gay, ugly or beautiful, according to his mood. It was as though he looked into a mirror, and saw reflected on its surface, now a battle-field where men-at-arms plunged forward, spears in rest, and archers plied their bows: he could almost hear the shouts of those who fought, and the clash of swords, and then the unreal warriors vanished and two knights appeared, reining their horses round for the career, and *they* dissolved in mist. Then he heard the

trumpets of a tourney, and saw a press of knights: he recognized their arms and proud devices, he saw the favors that they wore, and how they did their *devoirs*, while the ladies watched their champions with eager eyes.

Then this scene vanished, and he saw a charming valley outspread before him. On either side rose mountains sloping upward and away beyond his sight: over them hung a filmy veil of blue that half concealed the ravines, down which two torrents rushed to meet each other in the valley; and where they met, their waters rose in spray and snow-white foam, and circled round and round, then mingling, flowed gently on past banks spangled with violets, and found an outlet in the mountain pass. At either end of this valley stood a castle, turreted and strong, bidding defiance to all intruders in that fair domain; and in the centre rose a building fairy-like in beauty—for the others stood at the extremities of the valley like two grim warders, but this, reared by some enchanter, was of delicate, fantastic workmanship. Its walls were of marble set with fair arcades, whose columns were of porphyry of different colors, red and green and purple. Then there was a court surrounded by low balconies where the dwellers might sit and listen to the fountains, and above were more arcades, with polished columns veined in purple, blue and yellow, while within there was a maze of rooms all filled with precious things. The castle was surrounded by graceful domes and slender towers, whose roofs reflected back the setting sun in showers of gold.

In this enchanted valley the flowers bloomed all the year, and one might gather most delicious fruits: the evening air was heavy with the scent of roses and of citron blossoms. Sweet strains of music floated on the breeze, and the sound of pleasant laughter came from the

carved balconies, whose silken awnings swayed and fluttered languidly in the perfumed air.

Let us not blame count Guy for dreams that served to while away the time that weighed so wearily upon him. They were ridiculous perhaps, but it was an age of extravagant fancies, when men's minds began to awaken, and sought for something better than the dry husks of scholastic philosophy on which they had been fed: nor is it strange, that, refusing to be nourished on worn-out systems of theology, they rushed headlong into vagaries just as false, perhaps, but infinitely more pleasant and refining. Without books they were compelled to listen to spoken tales and songs, and those in whom the intellect began to stir drank in deep draughts of romance, glad to escape thus from the stern reality of sorrow and death that surrounded them, and seizing eagerly this new power of living in another world.

Count Guy was aroused from contemplation of his *chateaux en Espagne*, by the noisy departure of Lanard's guests, and throwing himself on his bed was soon asleep, continuing his waking dream, perhaps, by forming the acquaintance of the gentle inhabitants of his enchanted castle.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN count Guy awoke, the sunlight was streaming into his chamber through the casement from which he had looked the evening before into the gloom of a night dismal with fog and rain. Perhaps sleep had kindly united the broken threads of his reverie, and brought again the vision of the valley and its fairy castle, or perhaps the sun, that great magician, touched his eyes with his transforming wand; but certainly Guy sprang up feeling as though the world had changed in the night. His forebodings had vanished with the darkness and the rain; he felt light-hearted; all the buoyancy of youth and health was stirring within him.

From the street arose the busy hum of life: he heard the voice of his hostess, as she went singing about her morning work, and when Lanard knocked at his door, he found his young master in a cheerful mood and ready to listen to his account of the supper of the night before. He laughed heartily at the student's drunken speech, which Lanard described, imitating at the same time the attitude of Rolin's friend as he stood on the bench, swaying from side to side, and waving his empty wine-cup in the air. "I fear these students are too fond of liquor to make good soldiers," said the count; "their heads and legs would be too unsteady, and their hands readier to grasp the wine-jug than the sword: we had best not depend upon aid from them, Lanard."

"By your leave, my lord, I do not agree with you," an-

swered Lanard, respectfully. "Truly, they are hard drinkers, but if anything can keep them sober, it is fear of losing their privileges, and they will fight like devils for the honor of the University."

"I do not place much confidence in them, Lanard, but perhaps you are right, and if you can make them believe that the Provost means to injure them, you may be able to manage them."

"Trust me for that, my lord. I will persuade them that their charter will be taken away, that Callet and his robbers will invade the haunts they love. I will so work upon them that you will soon have a stout following of these learned gentlemen."

"Well, well," returned the count, laughing at Lanard's enthusiasm, "you shall have your way; but here comes our host. How now, Robert, have you an aching head this morning? My faith! you had a merry time of it last night; I hope your wine played you no ugly tricks, for you spared it not, I think."

"No, my lord, it flowed freely enough, and played me no tricks neither, for my wine hath none of these new-fangled drugs that make your head whirl like a mill-wheel, so please you."

"Ha, hath it not? what then dizzied the brain of the poor student, and made him play the fool for your amusement?"

"It was not the fault of my wine, good my lord, but when he came he was half drunk already, and his head is weak."

"And if a man drinks not a whole pipe, his head is weak, forsooth! Why, you would have all men wine bibbers, my good Robert."

"Yes, my lord," said Bonel, "for I should drive a fine

trade if they were; there is master Rolin, now—if all were but as sound drinkers as he, I should grow rich as a Jew. Holy Virgin! I never knew before a man could drink so much, and not be drunk!”

“And did you throttle master Red Beard? methinks I heard you say you would choke his life out when you met him. What, didst not dare to keep thy threat, man? Faith, I thought better of your spirit!”

Robert looked a little ashamed, but Lanard came to his relief, and told the count that Rolin had apologized for his conduct, and declared that he was drunk when he kissed Susanne. “Yes, my lord,” admitted Robert, “I did say that I would be revenged upon him, but Lanard invited him, and he is a friend of his, and then—and then—why, indeed, my lord, he is such a merry fellow, and so good-natured, that, if he but looked in his face, Satan himself could not bear him malice; his eyes have such a twinkle in them, and there be such funny lines and crooks about his mouth, that one can scarcely help laughing for company of the merry devil that lives inside of him and looks out of his eyes. I promise you, my lord, that I was in a fine rage when he came in last night, and his fellows at his back. He came and clapped me on the shoulder, and asked me to forgive him, but I had a better mind to strike him, and refused to take his hand, until the jolly devil peeped out at me from underneath his eyelids, and winked and grinned in such an uncouth way that I burst out laughing, and felt no anger any more.”

“I think Robert had a mind to try his strength with Rolin,” said Lanard.

“That I had—but, good my lord, when I forgive I forget, too; and I would not lay a hand on master Rolin now, though the Provost himself bade me; not that I am

afraid, but why should I quarrel with such a good-natured companion, my lord?"

"Why, indeed!" returned the count, "it is far pleasanter to drink a friendly cup with him, than to break each other's heads."

"Not that I care for a broken head or so, neither," said Robert stoutly, "for I will stand up to any man of my degree, as long as he likes, and run the risk of having him crack my crown."

Guy laughed. "If your deeds are as brave as your words, my good fellow, you had best follow Lanard to the wars."

"No, no," returned Robert, shaking his head, "I e'en gave up that trade when I married Susanne. "But, good my lord, is it true that the Provost will let the peasants into Paris? for if it be, we shall all have to fight, whether we will or no."

"It would be easier to keep them out than to fight them after they are within, would it not?" said the count.

"Truly it would, my lord, but I hope they will not get in, for if they do, we inn-keepers will be ruined men."

"Well, well, Robert, Lanard will talk with you about these things; follow the advice he gives you. Hark! there is a knock—go see whether it is a messenger."

Bonel went out, and soon returned followed by Mailart, who came to report the result of the conference held at his house. This was satisfactory, and the count was pleased to learn that the merchants would be able to raise and equip quite a strong force, which they were willing to place under his orders. He then inquired about his friend, d'Ervand, and was glad to hear that his wound was healing rapidly. "The vicomte," said he, "owes your good wife thanks for her kindness."

"She has taken pleasure in caring for him," answered Maillart, "for she hath a kind heart, but, truly, it has been no trouble to us, for we have prospered well, and have but one child, and she is a good girl, thank God."

"You have no other children?"

"No, my lord, and I used to think it hard that I had no son to carry my business on after me, but now I seldom brood over it, for Jeanne is a great comfort to me."

"And I suppose you give her all she asks for, and she rules the household," said Guy, smiling.

"No, my lord, we do not always yield to her, but I confess she knows right well how to persuade us to gratify her wishes."

"Ah, I warrant she plays the tyrant with you! but, Master Maillart, I shall go soon to visit the vicomte, and must make the acquaintance of your good wife and daughter."

"They will be very proud, my lord," replied the wine-merchant rising.

Guy took from his breast a pin of delicately chased work set round with small pearls: "You must give me leave" he said, "to send this little trinket to mistress Jeanne. 'Tis not valuable," he added, as Maillart hesitated, "a trifle that took my fancy when I saw it first."

"Florentine work, is it not, my lord?" returned the wine-merchant examining it, "but you should not turn the child's head with such jewels."

"Do not refuse it if you think it would please her," said Guy, smiling, "she has perhaps helped to nurse my friend; tell her it is a token of my thanks."

"You are very kind, my lord: 'tis beautiful workmanship, far finer than that of our goldsmiths; it will

please Jeanne wonderfully. I give you thanks," and bowing respectfully the merchant took his leave.

As soon as he was alone count Guy threw on his cloak, and taking his sword descended to the room below, where he found Robert engaged in an eager conversation with Lanard. Motioning the latter to follow him he left the hostelry, and walked on directing his course according to his fancy, for he had no particular object in view except to escape from his chamber, for he felt the need of air and exercise, and although he had some horses in the stable, he had not used them, for the streets were badly paved and full of holes, so as to be almost unfit for riding. But the young count would have given a handful of gold to have been transported at that moment to his chateau, and, falcon on wrist, to have been mounted on his good horse galloping along the stream that wound its way through his meadows. He sighed as he reflected that it would probably be long enough before he could indulge himself again in his favorite amusement, and paid no heed to Lanard, who meanwhile was less abstracted, and made good use of his eyes. They had reached the river, and were walking slowly along the quay, when Lanard touched his master's arm, and called his attention to a group of people a little distance in front of them, but lower down, and standing at the river's edge.

"There is some villany yonder," said he; "do you see those three men, my lord, who hold an old man and a woman between them? There is a boat, too."

"By St. Victor!" cried the count, "they are carrying them off by force, for the woman's arms are bound and she has a scarf over her face. Follow, Lanard!" and loosening his sword in its belt, he ran hastily forward. But before

they reached the water, the man who seemed to direct the others had placed the lady (for they were soon near enough to distinguish her dress) in the boat, and standing on the gunwale, was giving some order to the two fellows who held the old man by the arms. The savage gestures of this man showed that he was about to commit some act of violence, and as the count came up he heard him say. "Fasten a stone about his neck, knaves, and put him in the boat ! We will see whether the old sorcerer can swim from the middle of the Seine ! make haste, rascals !" While he was urging them thus, he let go his hold of the lady's arm, and she, darting away from him, ran to the end of the boat and sprang out. As her hands were bound she would have fallen, had the count not reached the spot in time to receive her in his arms.

Meanwhile Lanard drew his sword and instantly attacked the fellows who held the old man. He ran one of them through the body before his master could come to his assistance, and the other throwing down his weapon shoved off the boat, and leaping in, seized the oars and quickly placed some distance between himself and his unexpected assailants.

When the lady Yolande, for the reader has doubtless recognized her, escaped from the boat, the baron de Roye, seeing her movement, attempted to grasp her arm ; but she eluded him, and losing his balance he fell heavily forward, striking his head against the edge of the rower's seat, so that he lay apparently insensible. His servant after rowing a little distance put down his oars, and taking some water in his hand, dashed it in his master's face. It evidently revived him, for he sat up and then getting slowly upon his feet, looked about him with a bewildered air, but quickly realizing what had happened,

his actions expressed the most furious anger. He placed his hand on his dagger and made a movement as though he would have stabbed the man who held the oars; then turning toward the shore, he shouted, in a voice hoarse with passion: "Ha, you have baffled me, but I will have revenge, and you shall dearly repent this deed, for I know you, count de la Roche. Malisons upon you! you shall answer this!"

"Willingly," replied Guy, "here and now, or elsewhere I hold myself in readiness to chastise you, and maintain that you are false and unworthy knight."

"By heaven, Count, you had best look to yourself, for I will have your life for this," muttered de Roye as he seated himself, and without giving a glance at the body of his servant who had fallen, he ordered his man to go forward and cross the river.

Count Guy's first act had been to release the lady Yolande from the scarf that covered her mouth, and to sever with a stroke of his dagger, the kerchief with which her hands were bound, and then as Lanard did not require his aid, he stood watching the gestures of the furious baron, until the latter seated himself and with an oath commanded his trembling servant to row to the other side of the stream. All stood silent watching the boat until it reached the opposite bank, where its occupants landed and were soon lost to view in the streets of la Cité.

Count Guy then approached the lady, who turned upon him a face lovely indeed, but doubly beautiful now, flushed by excitement, and aglow with gratitude that found eloquent expression in the eyes that had haunted him so long.

"My lord," she exclaimed, "you have rescued me from

dreadful peril ! Receive my earnest thanks for freeing me from the hands of yonder villain baron."

"No thanks are due me, fair lady," returned Guy, "and believe me, I thank Heaven for the happiness of having served you; yet, my faith ! I had small part in the affair, for my good Lanard bore all the blows. But trust me, I am sorry the baron escaped, for he well deserves death for this outrage !"

"Oh, he is a hateful man, my lord ! but Bertrand will tell you how he was abused by him ; and for him to dare to lay his hands upon me ! Ah, how it angers me !" and her flashing eyes bore witness to the truth of her words.

"Dear lady," said the physician, "we are not far from home ; would it not be well for us to return ? and if the noble gentleman will bear us company, we can more fitly thank him."

"You are right, Bertrand, I am not courteous enough. Will you honor us so far," she said, turning to Guy with a smile.

"By your leave I will accompany you very joyfully," replied the count, "but first let me examine this poor fellow who has fallen."

"I think he is dead, my lord," said Lanard, "but if this gentleman is a physician—"

"Yes," interrupted Bertrand, "let me look at him." A brief examination showed him that the baron's servant was dead, and leaving him there, they made their way to the house of the Sire de Coucy.

At their summons the door was opened by Anton, who was not a little surprised to see his lady return attended by a strange nobleman. She desired him to take charge of Lanard, and to see that he had some refresh-

ment. "He has just done me a service, Anton," she said, "so look that you become friends."

Bertrand then led the way to his room, where Yolande begged the count to seat himself, while she retired to make some change in her dress, which was in truth rather disordered. During her absence the old physician explained to Guy what we already know in regard to the baron de Roye, and his efforts to obtain the hand of his lady; how they had come to Paris, where the baron had followed them; how he had prevented his seeing Yolande, and the baron's rage at being thus baffled in his hopes.

He told how he had been beaten in the street, how the vicomte had been wounded, and finally, how it happened that they had fallen into the baron's hands that day.

It will be remembered that Yolande had insisted upon going to mass contrary to the wishes of Bertrand. "My lady is so high-spirited," he said, "that she sometimes refuses to listen to me. She knows no fear and laughs at danger. Well, my lord, after service was ended we left the church, and I looked in vain for the servants who had followed us; they were not in sight and I began to dread some evil. But we started homeward and had reached this street, when two men leaped out from a vaulted way, and threatened me with death if I cried out; at the same moment de Roye seized my lady, and threw a scarf over her face to prevent her from screaming. He bound her wrists, and then they hurried us away to the river where the boat was waiting. When you came up they were about to fasten a heavy stone around my neck, for he had sworn to drown me. You know the rest. But you surely saved my life, and be sure, my lord, that I am deeply thankful, and hope to live to prove it by doing you some service."

"Give it no thought, good sir," said Guy smiling pleasantly. "'Tis a trifle not worth remembering."

"But there is no sin like ingratitude, good my lord," replied Bertrand gravely, and yet although I owe my life to you, and would not be ungrateful for it, I thank you ten-fold more for saving my dear lady from the clutches of the baron. He is a dangerous man and hath a most revengeful spirit. I fear he will attempt to injure you."

"I care not, and only wait an opportunity to punish him," answered the count.

"But yet be on your guard, my lord, for he is treacherous and will seek revenge; not honorably, but by some devilish means, and I hope you will not scorn an old man's counsel."

"No," replied the count, smiling, "I will be on my guard and thank you for the warning. But I must not forget to tell you that the gentleman whom the baron wounded is a friend of mine, the vicomte d'Ervand."

"Ah! I hope he was not badly hurt, my lord. I blame myself for not staying near him, but truly I was so confused and weak with pain, that I only thought of making my way here in safety. If you will tell me where he is, I will go and thank him for defending me, and then, I am a physician, perhaps I can do him good."

Guy assured him that the vicomte's wound was almost healed, and that he only required good nursing to be as well as ever.

"But, Master Bertrand," said he, "you say two servants followed when you went to the church, have they returned?"

"No, my lord, and I fear the baron has made way with them."

"Yes, no doubt he watched you, and while you were

in the church fell upon your men, and either killed or made them prisoners, and then lay in wait for you ; 'tis more than like. My faith, what a villain ! ”

“ He is so, my lord, therefore do not fail to guard against his treachery.”

When Guy learned that Yolande was the daughter of the Sire de Coucy who had been a friend of his father, he remembered that he had a short time before received an invitation to visit him. It is needless to say that he now regretted not having accepted it, for he had thus lost an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the lady Yolande. However, he determined not to indulge in vain regrets for what was past, and turning to his companion inquired how he occupied his time, “ for I suppose,” he said pleasantly, “ you do not go much abroad, since the baron de Roye is ever on the watch to do you a mischief.”

“ I spend some time,” answered Bertrand, “ in managing the household which the Sire de Coucy left in my charge, and afterward lady Yolande is often pleased to have me read to her, or we converse upon subjects she has studied. Then I read these books, my lord,” and he rose to show his visitor the manuscripts ranged about the room. Some of these the count had read, others were new to him ; but Bertrand appeared to be familiar with them all, taking up one after another as lovingly as though they had been his children. “ Here” said he, “ are Virgil, Cicero, Ovid—you have read them ? that is well indeed ! Livy, you know him not, you say ? and these Arabic scrolls, my lord, there is much wisdom in them, for the Saracens have penetrated deep into the mysteries of nature, and put to shame us who are Christians. They know the laws that govern the complex movements of the stars, and have marked the shining tracks of comets

that appear like fiery dragons in the sky, and burn, and disappear to come again when we are dead perhaps and fright our children. But in these scrolls we learn how to compute the periods that elapse before those heavenly visitants return again, and how they move in their erratic course. On these charts we trace each constellation, the movements of the planets and their influence, and how the moon affects the ocean tides. Then too these Moors and Saracens have searched for virtues hidden in the trees and flowers and herbs, distilled their juices, learned all their properties and how to separate or unite them; how to extract those essences that, by themselves or mingled with each other, have healing qualities or deadly powers. All these you will find here; but they say the learned men who wrote these scrolls knew many secrets that they set not down in writing but preserved, transmitting them by word of mouth, and leaving them as legacies to friends whom they held dear. One of these secrets I discovered once by a strange chance: I will tell you of it sometime if you please.

"But" continued Bertrand, "much as I prize these scrolls, I would give them all for one I saw last year when I was at Bologna, written by Dante. You know his history, my lord, and how he was banished by the ungrateful Florentines who now begin to boast of him. Truly he will reflect more lustre on their city in the time to come than ever their proud Neri or Bianchi dreamed of. Yes, when the petty warfare of their nobles is forgotten, and its memory is buried deep beneath the dust of centuries, his name will, like the sun, hang over Florence and illuminate her history! Ah, what a mind he had, this Dante! what a fund of learning! what a prodigious memory! how like a sur-

geon doth he probe the heart until it seems as though he plucked it quivering from the breast, it lies so bare and open to our view. Yes, yes, my lord: you must read Dante if you would learn to know the heart!"

"But," asked Guy, interrupting the enthusiastic scholar, "do you never ride or hunt, or fly the hawk?"

"Such sports are not for me," replied Bertrand, "but then, I am now too old to take pleasure in them, and am satisfied to read and ponder on my books, to study the stars, and watch over the happiness of my dear lady—whose eyes are like the stars—and try to do some little good to others, when I can. I wish, my lord" he said abruptly, "that you would let me cast your horoscope." The count laughed.

"I have no objection—you may do so if you will; but do you believe in the truth of what may be predicted by the stars?"

"Much may be read in them," returned the physician gravely, "but their mysteries are difficult to penetrate and often baffle us, even when we seek them reverently."

Guy knew that the hour of his birth had been recorded, and a little scroll containing this was enclosed in a locket that had belonged to his mother, and which he always wore about his neck. He gave this to Bertrand, who was delighted to see that it contained all the information necessary for his purpose, and placed it carefully in a small casket filled with similar scrolls, promising the count to let him know the result of his calculations. As he closed the casket, the door opened and Yolande came in, much to Guy's satisfaction, for although he was extremely interested in what he had seen and heard, he began to be impatient for her reappearance.

She asked whether Bertrand had related their adven-

ture, and again thanked the count for his opportune assistance. She also begged him to beware of the baron de Roye, who she declared would certainly try to be revenged. Guy promised to be on his guard, but inwardly resolved to seize the first occasion of avenging the insult offered to the fair girl, whose remarkable beauty he had now full leisure to observe.

Yolande asked whether it were not true that their fathers had been friends, "for" she said, "I have often heard my father speak of the count de la Roche as one of the bravest of the nobles who fell at Poitiers. Ah, forgive me!" she cried as she saw the shade that crossed his face, "I have caused you pain by my thoughtlessness."

Guy smiled a little sadly as he answered. "I should feel no pain to hear you speak of him, and yet my father's death was a great sorrow to me, for he was like an older brother and allowed me to be his companion constantly. We rode together, we flew our falcons and followed the chase in company, and he was ever ready to sympathize with me in my boyish sports. But I forget myself, and speak of that which cannot interest you."

"Do not say so, Count, but pray forgive me for speaking so heedlessly of what is such a sorrow for you to remember."

Guy was grateful for the sympathy which Yolande's face expressed, and roused himself to shake off the sadness that had oppressed him at the allusion to his father's death, and in a short time their conversation became more animated, for both had suffered from the loneliness the young are sure to feel when debarred from the society of those of their own age.

The count was charmed by the frank and sprightly

humor of his companion, and she was not ill pleased at the readiness with which he responded to her laughing sallies. If he glanced admiringly at the delicate oval of her face, and watched the light that glowed and deepened in the violet eyes, she was not unconscious that his features were noble and expressive, his figure perfectly proportioned and his movements graceful. Her intuition showed her more than Guy allowed his glances to express, and in truth his heart began to tingle with a strange sensation, as delightful as it was unfamiliar. They parted mutually pleased, and as Guy returned to the *Cerf Blanc*, he reflected that Paris was not so uninteresting as he thought.

CHAPTER XI.

MEANTIME the vicomte d'Ervand was confined to the house of the wine-merchant. The first few days dragged by wearily enough, for his wound was painful and the unwonted restraint irritated him. But Rolin had not boasted vainly of his physician's skill, and his salves and balsams had a magical effect. Mistress Maillart, too, was unremitting in her care, and as he rapidly improved, her guest became less discontented, especially after he was well enough for Jeanne to relieve her mother in the capacity of nurse. In truth he soon became reconciled to his situation, and was sorry that his wound promised to be healed so soon—for he found it not unpleasant to be an invalid, waited upon by so pretty an attendant. We find him then reclining comfortably upon a couch in a pleasant room, from whose windows he can see the Seine embracing its tiny islands in its arms, and winding its way through the heart of Paris. His eye rests upon the sails of vessels that arrive; he sees the groups of people standing on the wharf watching the unlading of these barques; he hears the shrill screams and the laughter of the peasant women, as they drive keen bargains for the fruit and vegetables they have for sale. As he lies there he is conscious that he is very comfortable, and that Jeanne will presently come to ask whether he requires anything. We fear the vicomte is a sad dog, for his mind is occupied at this moment in devising some fancied want that may serve to prolong her

visit, while at the same time, he wonders how he can lengthen the convalescence he finds so pleasant.

"*Peste!*" he mutters. "I shall have no reasonable excuse for staying here much longer: my shoulder is almost as well as ever, though I do pretend it is so sore and painful. 'Tis a good jest, but I fear I cannot prolong it or they will discover what a hypocrite I am. My faith, I wonder if they suspect it now! Mistress Jeanne is quick enough to penetrate that thin disguise. Truly she is a pretty maiden, and has a soothing touch with those light fingers; they are as soft as velvet. Where got she such a hand? and then her voice—by St. Geneviève, 'tis like the summer wind! and she a merchant's daughter. *Peste* upon it, this will not do! I must not lose my head! by our Lady, I believe I am in danger of losing my heart to this girl. What nonsense to think of her so much! no, no, this will never do. Why, the good Maillart and his wife have treated me with more confidence than I deserve, if I trifle with their daughter's heart, and by heaven! I will not repay them with such base ingratitude. Come, let me not forget myself. This girl is the daughter of an honorable man who has done me a great kindness—a merchant whom I must *repay*, and not be under obligation to. We are as far apart as Heaven and earth. So adieu to dreams that realized in earnest would be folly, and otherwise base and unworthy of me."

Having thus taken himself to task, the vicomte thought he could easily shake off the impression the young girl had made upon him. He dismissed the vague thoughts that filled his mind as though a breath could banish them, and began to wonder when the count de la Roche would come to see him, and how his affairs were progressing. "Guy has not visited

me for a week," he said to himself, "surely he must be very busy to neglect me so, or perhaps he thinks it pleasant to be shut up alone with a sword thrust to keep one company!" He forgot that he had been favored with society so pleasant as to make him regret that the sword thrust had not been more serious, and that a moment since he had wished that he could prolong the confinement that seemed so irksome now. His resolution to banish Jeanne from his mind, made him realize that his thoughts were not the pleasantest of companions, and made him suddenly unjust to count Guy, who had not by any means forgotten him. But the vicomte, with all the inconsistency of human nature, began to think himself an injured man, and blamed his friend for what he chose to consider his neglect.

In this disagreeable frame of mind he tossed about on his couch, allowing his eyes to wander about the chamber when they rested every moment on something that reminded him of Jeanne; for she had arranged the room in a tasteful way thinking to please his fancy. Turning impatiently from this survey, his glance fell upon the river shining in the afternoon sunlight. But the glancing sails, the shadows of the masts, the colors in the western sky had no charms for him. The noises and the laughter that had sounded far away, and mingled indistinctly with his pleasant thoughts, seemed near at hand, and loud and harsh: they grated on his ear and increased his irritation. He would have been glad to shut his eyes and stop his ears; he tried to sleep and could not, and was rapidly becoming very wretched when he heard a light knock at the door. He put his hand over his eyes and pretended not to hear, and after a moment's pause the door opened noiselessly, and the bright face of Jeanne Maillart peeped

in. Thinking the vicomte was asleep she was about to go away, when he made a slight movement. She hesitated and then closing the door behind her, went softly across the room. As she approached, he took his hand away from his face which was flushed and feverish.

"I thought you were asleep," she said; "I hope I did not disturb you. But what have you been doing, my lord?"

"Doing, my pretty maiden? nothing I think, but trying to sleep without success."

"Why, you look quite ill! you are flushed, and your forehead burns: I am afraid the fever has returned. We should not have left you so long alone. What bad nurses you will think us!" While speaking she had arranged the pillows, and brought a cooling draught which she held to his lips and insisted upon his swallowing: then seating herself, she began to pass her hands lightly over his face and brow, and asked whether he felt more comfortable.

"I feel as though a cool breeze had fanned me," he replied, laughing: "but really, Mistress Jeanne, you must not take so much trouble, I am getting well so fast that—"

"That what, my lord?"

"That I shall soon be able to use my arm as well as ever," he answered evasively, for he meant to say that his recovery would soon deprive him of her services, which he found exceedingly agreeable.

"But if you excite yourself, my lord, the fever will return, and then you will be more ill than before: so you must be very careful. Now this afternoon you must have done something imprudent to get so hot and restless. Did you not walk about? You have such a guilty look, my lord, that I believe you have been doing something very wrong; perhaps you even tried to go out of doors!

Confess," she added smiling, "confess, or we shall be afraid to leave you alone again."

"What a dreadful threat! Why, do you know, that penalty would induce me to do something very rash indeed; then I should see you oftener, Jeanne."

"Fye, my lord, you must not say such things, and I am sure you like best to be alone," glancing at him mischievously; "but no," she went on, shaking her head, "it would be too dangerous, and the fever would come back, so I shall tell my mother to stay more with you."

"And are you so busy, my little physician, who talk so wisely of wounds and fevers, is your time so precious that you cannot spare a little of it to sit with me yourself?" asked the vicomte, who had already forgotten his stern resolution to see as little of Jeanne as possible.

"O yes, my lord, I have scarcely time for anything! Let me see," counting on her fingers, "one hour to help my father, and two hours to help my mother, one to feed my birds; how many is that, my lord?"

"Four, my pretty mistress."

"Two hours to practice singing, that is six; and then an hour for walking, and then the meals and supper and other things. I don't know how many hours in all."

"You have counted seven," said the vicomte, laughing, "seven beside the meals and other things; but they would not take all the rest of the time, I think."

"I don't know," she replied, demurely, "the other things take a great while, my lord!"

"But surely, it would not take a whole hour to feed your birds. Why, you might feed a flock of birds in half an hour: and two hours for singing! You could learn all the *chansons* in the world, singing two hours each day,

and after all there are seven or eight remaining. I think you could spare a few of them, fair Jeanne."

"Well, I will see, my lord, but it really does take a great while to feed my birds."

"But birds have not such great appetites: they are easily satisfied."

"No indeed, you are mistaken, for my birds are not satisfied unless I let them talk to me."

"Can you understand their language?" asked the vicomte much amused.

"Of course I can, and they tell me all their secrets," said Jeanne.

"You mean you guess at them, for I never heard of but one man who understood the language of birds, and he was obliged to do a very disagreeable thing before he learned it."

"But perhaps women can learn more easily than men, my lord."

"Perhaps so, for they are more like birds than we."

"Why, my lord?" asked Jeanne.

The vicomte laughed as he replied: "I shall not tell you all the reasons, but I can tell you two of them if you wish. Because they have sweet voices and move gracefully."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jeanne, disdainfully, "you cannot know much about them, my lord, for there are a great many birds that do not sing at all, and some have horrid squeaky voices, then others are so clumsy about flying that they knock themselves against the trees. Why, did you never see a raven or a crane? what ugly things—and it is not nice of you to say that we are like them, no indeed!"

"But," replied the vicomte, laughing at her indignant

air, "did you never see a woman as awkward as a crane, and ugly as a raven?"

"No," said Jeanne, pouting, "never!"

"Well, I fear there are some, but I was not thinking of them when I spoke, but of those who are like the pretty singing birds."

"It is men who are like cranes and ravens and sparrow-hawks," returned the young girl, still indignant; "they are ever fighting and stealing! but I know why you say women are more like birds than men, without your telling me."

"Do you, indeed, why is it then, Jeanne?"

"You were thinking that it is because they chatter so, and it made you laugh: now here have I been chattering like any swallow, so I shall leave you. Does your head feel better, my lord?"

"Why, it is perfectly well; I owe you many thanks. What, you are not really going? You have not given me one half the time you give your birds. When will you come again to see me? I think my head will ache to-morrow."

"You must keep very quiet," said Jeanne, "or I shall send my mother to sit with you. If you are good perhaps I will come to-morrow—if I have time," she added, glancing at him demurely. "I wish you good e'en, my lord."

"Adieu, my pretty little physician," rejoined he, and the door closed behind the merry girl, whose nonsense had chased away his restless mood and left him in his usual good spirits. "I believe the girl has cast a spell over me," he said to himself. "She seems to possess the gift of charming away pain, and I must tell her that I think she is a witch. Ha, ha, how gravely she declared that she could understand the talk of birds! Upon my

word, she cheered my heart up wonderfully. I hope she will not forget to come again to-morrow." And he fell asleep thinking of Jeanne Maillart. Perhaps he dreamed of her, who knows?

CHAPTER XII.

ONE evening about this time, Rolin might have been seen striding along the rue St. Victor accompanied by his friend, the man-at-arms. Nevertheless, one must have been close at hand to recognize them, for it was a dark night: there was no moon, and the stars were partially obscured by the haze that overspread the sky, so that it was necessary for the student to turn now and then to warn his companion of some impediment, which he himself easily avoided since he was familiar with the path. Leaving the rue St. Victor they entered the rue St. Jacques, and followed it until nearly midway up the slope leading to the University, when they plunged into an alley so narrow that it seemed as though the houses met overhead, where their protruding upper stories, overhanging eaves and irregular roofs nodded at each other from across the way, and did their best to shut out the sky from the view of any one standing in the street below. Stopping before one of these houses, Rolin said that he had forgotten his dagger, and asked his companion to wait a moment while he fetched it. "I will not invite you to come in," he added, laughing, "unless you wish to climb five flights of stairs, for, by the gods! I live as near the sky as possible, so that I may not have so far to go to reach heaven when I die." He disappeared, but returned more quickly than one would have thought possible. Lanard asked how he managed to go and return so soon.

"My friend," replied the student, "I have long legs

and know how to use them : three bounds to each landing, five times three, and there you are ! ”

“ I should think you would break your neck in the dark. ”

“ Not I, my eyes are like a cat’s ; I can see in the night, even though I knew not every crook and turn in yonder nest ; but here we are, and if you are as thirsty as I, you will drain your cup in a twinkling. ”

While talking they had retraced their steps, and now entered a hostelry in the rue St. Victor. A number of guests were seated at the heavy oaken tables about the room. Some of them seemed by their dress to be travellers ; others, petty traders who, released from the confinement of their business, had come hither for the sake of the wine, or to gossip with their neighbors. One of the tables was occupied by five or six students, who saluted Rolin as he came in. He returned their greeting, but good-naturedly refused to accept their invitation to join them. “ No, ” said he, “ my friend and I are hungry and must have some supper before we drink. You have a good hour’s start of us, comrades, and we should drink you all under the table ! ”

“ A challenge ! a challenge ! ” they cried, “ we accept it, Rolin, and if you drink us down, we will pay the score. ”

“ Not to-night, friends, it would be unfair, for I should beat you ; another time, and we will commence earlier in the evening. ”

“ See that you come not late then, bird of night. Soho, Rolin, you owl ! when do you sleep ? ”

“ When the cock crows, ” he answered, laughing, “ but I will not forget your challenge, comrades, ” and passing on, he seated himself with Lanard at a small table in the

corner. From this place they could see all the occupants of the room, without being themselves observed. They then desired the host to bring them some food and plenty of wine, and prepared to enjoy themselves, for though it was already late, Rolin was a person who considered it one of the seven deadly sins to waste a whole night in sleep; and as he had declared, the crowing of the cock was his usual signal for going to bed. By the time they had finished their supper nearly all of the guests had gone, and presently the students rose unsteadily to their feet, and went away singing at the top of their voices.

"They seem to be jolly fellows," said Lanard, "are they friends of yours, Rolin?"

"Yes, and we have all of their names down for the service of the count, your master. By St. Geneviève! I hope he will give us an opportunity to come to blows with the Provost's men."

"Why so, are you not friendly with them?"

"Not we," said Rolin. "These gentlemen of the watch are too particular about a broken head or a stab, and the Provost threatens to clap us into prison if we do not stop amusing ourselves with the honest citizens."

"Why, a broken head or so, or even a stab now and then, I can understand well enough, for one will grow impatient when provoked," rejoined Lanard; "but devil take me, if I know what you mean by amusing yourselves with the citizens!"

The student laughed. "You see," he replied, "these merchants and goldsmiths and such like are grown so bold that they refuse to step aside into the ditch to make way for a student. They like not to soil their feet, forsooth, and swell themselves up with so much pride that you would take them for so many peacocks out for a holi-

day. So when a party of our fellows meet one of these rich citizens marching along with his head in the air, and his knavish apprentice in front of him to light the way, they begin to jeer at him and call out, 'Soho, Isaac Close-fist! whither away, old Moneybags?' or such like nonsense. If he takes offence and answers them, or uses threats, by St. Geneviève! 'tis the worse for him; for they seize and strip him, and after he has been well rolled in the gutter, they tie a long rope around his body, and throw him in the river, pulling him out when he is half strangled like enough. Then they tell him that the Emperor Julian left his baths as a legacy to the city of Paris, and decreed that if the citizens did not visit them at least once in a year, they should be caught and washed in the Seine at the public expense. Afterward, perhaps they will tie him to a post and shave his head as bare as my arm, and leave him then until the watch comes up and unbinds the shivering wretch. Ha, ha! 'tis great sport; but these pranks anger the worthy Provost, and he threatens to cage up the next student who amuses himself after this fashion, wherever he lays his hands on him. By the saints! if he plays us such a scurvy trick he shall smart for it. Think you we will forego our ancient privilege of being hanged in our own *quartier*? No, by St. Geneviève! we will prove to him in seven languages that he dares not punish us beyond the little bridge; and if he catches us on this side of the river, he is welcome to hang us if he can, but he will be more like to feel the cord around his own neck," and Rolin paused quite out of breath.

"Why, so he should," replied Lanard. "The devil! can he not allow you to amuse yourselves and have a little innocent pastime, when you must needs long for

some pleasant recreation after so many hours of hard study? I am a Jew if the young count does not give you your revenge upon him, for he has much love for all scholars, Rolin."

"Hath he so?" cried the student. "Aha, I thought he had more gentle learning than these nobles who ever ride about armed, and know how to read as well as my stick, by St. Geneviève! Know you where your lord studied, comrade?"

"In Italy, I believe, for he was a long time there," replied Lanard.

"Soho! and doth he know the ancients, and doth he comprehend the systems of Aquinas, and Roncelin, and Abelard—can he dispute in Latin?"

Although he had no idea whether the count was master of these acquirements, Lanard answered boldly, "Dispute? I have heard him dispute by the hour with our bishop in Latin, Greek and Italian, and I know not what other tongues, for I have no learning, much to my sorrow."

"'Tis a great pity, comrade," said Rolin, "for I believe you would make good use of it! But, my word, you draw a good bow at a venture! Greek, say you, why, our Rector himself can speak no Greek! If your lord can speak Latin and Italian he is no less than a prodigy, and I give him honor."

"Well," answered Lanard, "mayhap I am mistaken about the Greek; but I know he understands Hebrew."

Rolin looked at his companion a little doubtingly as he said: "He is a fine youth, and I would like well to have some talk with him. He has been in Italy, you say. Ha! I wish I could travel thither myself, but it takes gold, and I lack the crowns, comrade."

"I have heard that the Romans lived in that country,"

said Lanard, "they were good soldiers were they not, Rolin?"

"Good, say you? by the shield of Minerva! they were the very children of Mars, who was the god of war you know, comrade. Ha! I must get me some new oaths, for you understand not the classics. But these Romans" continued Rolin, "conquered the whole world, and were the best soldiers that ever marched. Did'st never hear of Cæsar, Lanard?"

"No, who was he?"

"St. Geneviève aid me!" cried the student, laughing, "You a man of war, and not know the name of the greatest general of the world! Forgive me, comrade, but 'tis a great pity you are so ignorant."

"So it is," replied Lanard good-naturedly, "but how am I to learn, if you laugh at me instead of answering my questions?"

"Truly you have an inquiring mind, and I have a good will to give you lessons in reading, then you could find out all these things for yourself."

"No, Master Rolin," said Lanard, "I am too old to learn to read, and must listen patiently to those who can; so tell me something about this great general as you call him. He was a skilful knight, I suppose, and a bold leader of men-at-arms?"

Rolin filled himself a cup of wine, and tossing it off, was about to give his companion a short sketch of the life and fortunes of Cæsar. He cleared a little space before him on the table, and prepared to illustrate the campaigns in Gaul with bits of bread to represent the frontiers of the provinces, and small streams of wine, which he poured out sparingly, for the rivers. But the lecture which he thought would

prove so interesting to Lanard, was interrupted by the entrance of two men, who, after glancing carelessly around concluded that the room was empty, sat down and began to talk. Their conversation was carried on in a low tone at first, but presently became so loud that our friends could not help overhearing it. When the strangers came in, Lanard, who could see them while he and Rolin were concealed, noticed that one of them wore a rough cloak that seemed familiar to him, and as soon as he saw his face, he recognized the servant who had escaped in the boat with his master, the baron de Roye. Touching Rolin's arm and pointing to the new-comers, he placed his fingers on his lips, and made the student understand that he wanted to hear this conversation.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE baron's rage at being foiled in his almost successful attempt to carry off the lady Yolande was beyond bounds, and found its first expression in threats against count Guy and abuse of his own servant. But he was too vindictive to be satisfied with empty theats, and his mind was soon busy in devising means whereby he could obtain a sure and safe revenge. He shut himself up alone to mature his plans, and avoided the possibility of meeting the count, who was thus lulled into a false security, and thought the baron would not dare to injure him.

But Guy would have formed a more correct estimate of the dark and treacherous character of this man, could he have heard the conversation that Lanard and Rolin listened to at the hostelry, where the fellow whom the man-at-arms had recognized, was explaining to his companions the details of a plot to waylay and murder both the count and his follower. It may be imagined that Lanard was deeply interested in hearing how they meant to accomplish their design, and the two ruffians, believing themselves alone, used so little caution that it was not difficult for him to overhear what they said.

Rolin indeed was unable to understand the allusions they made to the scene by the river, but he comprehended well enough that Lanard and his master were to be surprised and attacked by four armed men, who meant to fall upon them without warning. He sat quite silent, but

as he heard each detail of time and place arranged, his fingers clutched the hilt of his dagger and he glanced expressively at his companion, who listened with an unmoved countenance, while his death was being so carefully planned. He caressed his beard in a careless manner, and even smiled, but did not lose a single word of the conversation, and when the men rose to leave the room, he placed his hand quietly but firmly on the shoulder of his friend, nor did he open his lips until he was quite certain that they were alone; then turning to the student with a laugh he said :

“ ’Tis a well-laid plot, and might be successful enough if the fools had not betrayed themselves, and placed us on our guard.”

Rolin overwhelmed him with questions, for his curiosity was fully aroused, and he was not satisfied until he heard all that Lanard knew about the baron de Roye.

“ Aha,” he exclaimed, “ it is all clear to me now, but he must be a savage, this baron ! I wonder, comrade, how you could listen so quietly to his devilish plans ! Why did we not use our daggers on his two minions ? good faith ! when I heard them talk so coolly of stabbing you in the back, I thought it lucky that I brought this,” and he struck his weapon into the table where it quivered in the wood. “ There,” said he, watching it, “ I wish it were in the heart of the baron ! ”

Lanard laughed at his excitement. “ But, Rolin, if we had killed the baron’s men he would have formed some other plan : it is much better to let him try this, and as we know it, we will not be taken by surprise, and perhaps we can rid ourselves of him once for all.”

“ What cowards ! ” cried Rolin, “ four against two—and they taken at unawares ! But on my word, comrade, I

could scarce help laughing when I heard you knave describe you ; methinks he cares not to meet you again—the tall devil with the long sword, as he called you, ha, ha.”

“ Well, he ran away fast enough the other day,” rejoined Lanard, “ but if I have another chance at him, I mean to make him feel that same long sword of mine.”

“ I hope you will, but do you think you could manage it so that I could be with you to-morrow when these cowards attack you ? though perhaps, your lord will not go out when he knows.”

Lanard smiled. “ Will he not ? Good Rolin, you do not know the count, and I warrant you he will go out after dinner just as he always does.”

“ But he will be well attended, I suppose, so as to have the advantage if he is attacked.”

“ I know not that,” replied Lanard, thoughtfully, “ it would only be safe and reasonable, but the count is young and fearless, and may refuse to take any one beside myself. Well, I think we could get the better of the knaves even then, though the odds would be against us.”

“ Is your lord a good swordsman, Lanard ? ”

“ Good, say you ? he is a master ! such a wrist and arm ! it would do you good to see him wield his sword, Rolin, and I wish you could be with us to-morrow.”

“ If those four fall on you, he will need all his skill,” returned the student ; “ come, you must arrange it so that I shall be there. Gentle Saint Geneviève ! I would not miss seeing such an exploit for twenty crowns ! and I may aid you too : ’tis too reckless for two to pit themselves against four.”

Lanard reflected that this was true enough, and told Rolin to come to the Cerf Blanc the next day to dinner, and he would arrange it so that he could accompany them.

They parted with this understanding, and the student returned to his nest on the hill, while Lanard crossed the Seine and made his way homeward. The next morning he repeated to the count all that he had so fortunately overheard, and found as he suspected that the threatening danger would not deter him from taking his afternoon walk as usual. Neither would he mount on horseback as Lanard suggested, or hear of taking more attendants with him. "If you and I," he said, "are not able to punish these assassins, we must suffer for it."

"I have no fear, my lord," replied Lanard, "but yet it would be more prudent for you to take some precautions."

"You must remember, my good fellow, that instead of their surprising us, they will be taken by surprise and we shall have the advantage."

Lanard was not convinced, but finding it useless to remonstrate, was obliged to yield, and after dining, the count set out with his single attendant. They had scarcely left the inn, when Rolin, who had been in the kitchen, came out and followed them as had been agreed between Lanard and himself. Under his gown he wore a stout doublet, and he was armed with sword and dagger; he had stuck a cock's feather in his cap, and was in high spirits at the prospect of an affray in which he hoped to take part. Keeping a short distance behind the count, who did not observe him, he strode along, looking from side to side with a keen glance that took note of everything. They proceeded in this fashion, and had gone perhaps two hundred paces, when they reached the corner of a narrow lane that opened out of the street along which they were passing. Here they were confronted by the baron de Roye and his men, all of whom sprang upon them so suddenly, that had they not been prepared for it,

the assault would probably have been fatal to the count and the brave man-at-arms. They were, however, upon their guard, and their swords flashed in the air as their assailants threw themselves upon them.

The baron attacked Guy furiously, crying out, "Ha, Count de la Roche, I have thee now, and by heaven, thou shalt die!"

The count made no reply, for he saw one of the baron's men creeping up behind him with his sword raised, but parrying the first stroke aimed at him by de Roye, he struck the uplifted sword of his servant and sent it flying fully five paces from his hand. This he did with a backward sweep of his arm that was incredible in its rapidity and force. While the man retreated to regain his weapon, Guy attacked the baron and pressed him hard, but while thus engaged he was not sorry to see Rolin run up at full speed, and place himself by the side of Lanard, who was defending himself bravely against his two assailants.

"Have at you, dog!" shouted the student, delivering a blow at one of them which forced him to turn and confront him. "Coward!" he cried, "do you set two upon one? by Saint Geneviève, I will teach you to lay ambushes in the daytime in the streets of Paris! Aha! son of a robber, now will I show you the swordsmanship we use at the University. Soho! there thou ugly knave, with thy bottle nose, thy donkey ears and thy matted beard! by Jupiter! I will so carve thy chin that thou wilt never wear beard again! so wilt thou be saved the trouble of combing it hereafter. God's death! and I will have a piece of thy nose, and thy long ears, before I cut thy lying throat. *O, mort de ma vie!* friend Lanard,

'tis fine sport, for I play with this varlet as a cat does with a mouse !”

“Make an end of him if you can, and quickly, too !” shouted Lanard, who did not forget that they were still outnumbered. “Guard yourself, Rolin !” he exclaimed, as he saw the man whom the count had disarmed, approaching the student. But the latter was too intent upon an artistic exhibition of his skill, to notice this new attack, and still continued to make feints, while his tongue kept pace with his wrist, as he hurled abuse and scorn at his antagonist.

Meantime, count Guy had forced de Roye backward, step by step, until he could retreat no farther without coming in contact with the wall of a house, and when the baron could no longer give ground, the superior swordsmanship of the count was soon apparent ; a few sweeps of his blade decided the contest, for the baron's sword was struck from his hand, and he was at Guy's mercy. Whether he would have spared his life is very doubtful, for he had reason to be, and was, extremely incensed at this murderous assault, and, besides, he had vowed to avenge the insult to Yolande de Coucy. At this moment the cowardly servant, seeing his master disarmed, dared not go to his assistance, and feared to encounter the long sword of the man-at-arms, who had wounded his antagonist severely. Choosing then what seemed the safest course, he had stolen up behind the student, and raising his sword was about to give him a stroke that would certainly have ended the days of that ornament of the University of Paris. But the warning shout of Lanard saved Rolin's life, as well as that of the baron, for Guy, seeing at a glance the danger in which the student was placed, reached him in time to receive the descending blow upon his sword, and snatching the dagger from his belt, with his

left hand, he dashed its hilt with such force into the face of the miscreant as to stretch him stunned and bleeding upon the ground. The baron made use of the time thus gained: he leaped over a wall and disappeared, abandoning his men to their fate. They, seeing one of their number lifeless on the ground, and their master fled, avoided the swords of Lanard and Rolin as well as they could; they were bleeding from numerous wounds, and the student had partially fulfilled his promise to his opponent, who had lost one of his ears and a part of his chin. Rolin would gladly have continued to dissect his subject, which he could have done with ease, for he was no match for him in skill, and was terrified at the prospect amiably held out to him of being carved into small pieces. But the count put an end to the combat. He desired Rolin to hold his hand, and compelled the baron's men to give up their weapons, bidding them carry away their comrade who was still insensible.

"Perhaps it is folly to let them escape," thought Guy, as they retreated, bearing their companion with them, "but they are not so much to blame, after all, and I cannot see them cut to pieces in cold blood; but they have had a lesson they will not soon forget."

Indeed they had been roughly handled, and presented a pitiable spectacle as they dragged themselves away; nor was there much comfort for them in the prospect of meeting their master, whose violent temper would not be improved by the failure of a scheme he had thought certain of success. Guy turned to the student to thank him for his timely assistance, but Rolin exclaimed: "Thank me not, my lord, but rather let me thank you for saving my life, for had you not caught the blow yon coward aimed at me, I had been fairly sped. You have a strong arm

and a quick eye, my lord Count: by our Lady, that backward stroke of yours was wonderful! I never saw the like of it, and we think ourselves good swordsmen at the University."

The count smiled, as he answered: "'Tis like I have had more practice than most, and my good Lanard taught me that backward sweep of the arm. Faith! I am glad to see you are not hurt, Master Rolin, and you," he added, turning to Lanard, "I hope you are not wounded."

"Not a scratch, my lord."

"Good! then we have all escaped unhurt, but I doubt we would have been so fortunate if master Rolin had not come up."

"Never speak of it, my lord," said he, "I would not have missed this for a silk-lined cloak! but I wish they had not escaped so easily, for I would fain have had a few more cuts at the face of that knave. Ha, ha! my lord, you should have seen him tremble when I told him his face was too long, and I would e'en shorten it by cutting off his pointed chin."

"Your pleasantry would have cost you dear," said Lanard, "had the count not stopped the blow that would have cloven your head. At such times, comrade, 'tis best to be on your guard against surprises."

"You say true," rejoined the student, "and I will not forget the lesson."

"Right, friend Rolin, quick work is safest when there is a naked sword behind you. But, my lord," asked Lanard, "did the baron escape?"

"Yes," said the count, in a tone of regret. "I had disarmed him when I heard your shout, and faith! I had but just time to reach our friend here. By our Lady, it

angers me that he should have got away without punishment ! ”

“ ’Tis a pity,” returned Lanard, “ for he will not rest until he has his revenge, and your life will never be safe while he is at large. Will you walk on, my lord, or will you return to the inn ? ”

They retraced their steps to the *Cerf Blanc*, where Guy found a messenger from the marquis de la Rivière, and taking from him the letters he had brought, he went to his room to read them, leaving the man to the care of Lanard and Rolin, who were soon deeply engaged in discussing the adventure they had just had. The messenger and Robert Bonel listened eagerly to the student’s animated description of the affray, which certainly lost nothing through his narration, for he did not scruple to make various additions to the truth, exaggerating and embellishing as he thought proper to heighten the interest, as an artist dashes in bits of vivid coloring to render his landscape more picturesque.

As Rolin finished his story, the honest Robert ejaculated : “ Holy Virgin ! what villains they must be ! To think they would have murdered my lord count, and you too, friends ! What would my lord marquis have said, if the count had lost his life at my very door, and I not by to strike a blow for him ! Our Lady be thanked that you were near, Master Rolin, and,” he added, crossing himself, “ may I stay forever in purgatory, if I think evil of you again ! Wilt swear eternal friendship with me, Master Rolin ? ”

“ Willingly,” replied he, holding out his hand, “ and so, Robert, you will not look on me with distrust again ? Good, for by St. Geneviève ! you may place confidence in me, and if you will let Mistress Susanne fetch us some

wine, I will show you how respectfully I can treat her. Devil take me, but you are a lucky fellow to have such a wife, and I warrant she thinks there is no man in the world like you. Soho, Lanard, when a girl gets such a husband as Robert here, she ought to think herself lucky."

"Yes, yes," said Lanard gravely, "so she should."

Bonel who was not insensible to flattery went to the door, and called his wife who presently came in with a plentiful supply of wine, which she placed on the table. She glanced a little doubtingly at Lanard and Rolin, for she scarcely knew what to think of being allowed to wait upon them, which Robert had been careful not to do for some time past. However, she filled their cups and accepted their greeting very demurely, for the suppressed twinkle in Rolin's eyes as they met hers, assured her that he had neither forgotten or regretted the stolen kiss that had so enraged her husband. But he seemed now to have cast away his jealousy, and only thought of making himself agreeable to the former object of his suspicion.

Guy was deeply interested in the contents of the packet, which informed him of the progress of the peasant insurrection and of the measures taken to suppress it. The marquis assured him that Guillaume Callet and those who followed him would soon receive a terrible punishment, that he had aroused the nobles, had gathered a strong force in the neighborhood of Meux, and had strengthened the garrison of that city which he did not think the peasants would dare attack. He asked Guy to send him word of the condition of things at Paris, and of the progress he had made, and though the count read all this with the natural eagerness of

one who has had no reliable news for a long time, he was still more interested in what followed. For the marquis went on to say that he had seen the Sire de Coucy, who, unable to return to Paris, and hearing that Guy was there, begged him to see his daughter, assure her of his safety, and say to her that he wished her to go back to Coucy. The marquis stated that de Coucy was alarmed at the reports he heard from Paris, and feared lest there should be some wild outbreak there that would place Yolande in danger. He thought she would be safer at Coucy, whither it did not seem probable now, that the peasant revolt would extend, and although he did not know whether it would be possible to send her there, he requested Guy to see whether it would be safe for her to make the journey, and if so, to provide her with a suitable escort. If this was impossible, he entreated the young count to watch over her safety, until he was able to leave the camp, and trusted that he would render him this service for the sake of his father's ancient friendship; and he sent a small packet to Yolande, explaining more particularly his reasons for wishing her to proceed to Coucy if she could do so in safety.

Guy was delighted at the opportunity thus afforded him of continuing his acquaintance with Yolande. He thought to himself that it should not be his fault if he neglected to improve the opportunity Heaven had sent, and it was with a light heart that he placed the packet in his breast, and seating himself, began to write to the marquis. He gave him a careful account of what he had accomplished, and asked him to say to the Sire de Coucy that he thanked him for the confidence reposed in him, and that he heartily desired to continue his

father's friendship. He assured him that it should be his care to see that Yolande set out with a safe escort, unless it were impossible to leave the city, and that in any event he should consider it his duty to defend her at the peril of his life. He requested the marquis to send him more definite instructions upon certain points about which he was uncertain, and if possible to arrange for more frequent communication. He then summoned the messenger, and finding that he was able to return at once, gave him his missive to de la Rivière, and bestowing a piece of gold upon him, bade him make his way back with all speed.

Leaving the count to indulge himself in pleasant anticipations of a visit to Yolande, which we may be sure he did not long defer, let us turn our attention to the scenes taking place in the neighborhood of Meux.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN the peasants surrounded that heap of stones by the river Marne, and heard in fear and trembling the invitation to revolt, they had assembled there by stealth to listen to the words of Guillaume Callet. They had not dared to raise their voices lest the wind should bear the sound to those who would betray them. Silently they gathered there, formed their brotherhood, and bound themselves with oaths to devote their lives to the destruction of the nobles ; silently they dispersed, stealing away by twos and threes, so fearful of discovery that the breaking of a twig beneath their feet startled them, the light foot-falls of the deer as they bounded across the glades seemed to them the tramp of horses in pursuit, and the croaking of the frogs was magnified into the shouts of men who chased them. It was so new a thing for them to think for themselves, to act independently, to separate themselves from the will of their masters, that they trembled at their own audacity. They could not persuade themselves that they would not be overtaken by swift and certain punishment.

Whence arose these feelings—this dim regret that was not repentance ; this shudder at a voluntary act ; the dread that made those men start aside and look fearfully behind them, as they passed through the forest that night—or was it the deception of the moonlight, that made them see by every rock and tree, the giant figure of a phantom stretching out his arms as if to seize them ?

No, they were simply afraid ; they were terrified at the rebellion they had conceived, at the oaths they had sworn, at the very thought of lifting their hands against those whom they had been accustomed to serve upon their knees, to treat with reverence as though they had been gods. Fear summoned up the phantoms of the forest to mock them ; to shriek in their ears that they were mad to dream of taking vengeance on those who would crush them beneath their horses' feet, who would mutilate their limbs and break them on the wheel !

If these men had failed in their first attack upon the nobles, they would have yielded at once, so firmly was the habit of submission implanted in their breasts ; and it required the exertion of all his influence, for Callet to persuade them to strike the first blow. But when they saw that this was not punished as a sacrilege, that Ervanne had fallen into their hands and yet Heaven did not blast them with its lightning, they took courage. Thenceforward the persons of the seigneurs were no longer sacred in their eyes, and having once shed their blood they cast away the terror that had oppressed them at this thought, and passing from one extreme to the other with the thoughtlessness of ignorance, they exulted in what had before seemed to them a profanation. The sanguinary judgment that we have seen Callet administering in his hut, had now become habitual. All were intoxicated with blood. Having desolated the surrounding country, having pillaged and burnt the castles that were not strong enough to resist them, the peasants thought their object was already accomplished, and that they had shaken off forever the bondage of their lords. Perhaps they had achieved the end they most ardently longed for : revenge.

The cruel slavery to which they were subjected had

roused such hatred in their breasts, as to leave no room there for any other feeling than a burning desire to avenge themselves on their oppressors, and shake off their yoke. Their aspirations did not extend beyond that point. None among them was intelligent enough to see that this was but the first step toward freedom ; none pointed out to them that even this first step was false, and would defeat their object. For once in their lives they had abundance of food and drink ; they decked themselves in costly garments, they rejoiced that they had spoiled the spoiler, and this shadowy independence satisfied them for the moment. They did not perceive the black clouds gathering on the horizon ; they did not divine or guard against the storm that muttered ominously, and was destined to overwhelm them ! If they had possessed a leader more intelligent than themselves, who can say what the result of their struggle might have been ; and yet it is probable that if Callet had been wise, and firm and moderate, as he was ignorant, vacillating and cruel, he would have had no influence over them. But the very qualities that rendered him unfit to direct this movement of the people so that good should result from it, gave him unbounded sway over his followers. They were impelled to revolt by the remembrance of injuries received, hardships endured, unjust punishment borne ; by desire of revenge upon an individual tyrant, by some special grievance that they hoped to escape from or take bitter vengeance for, while the heart of Guillaume Callet was filled with every evil passion. He sympathized with every motive, with every ferocious instinct that animated the peasants : all of their grievances, all of their hatreds found an echo in his breast. If his companions were partially satisfied with what they had ac-

complished, he was still insatiable. The flame that consumed him burned more fiercely than ever, and the demons that inspired him quaffed the blood with which he deluged their altars, and evermore demanded new victims. To satisfy them, to offer them a banquet where helplessness and innocence should be the sacrifice, he now proposed to attack the town of Meux, hoping to find there full scope to gratify the fury that seethed within his heart. It seemed as though a legion of devils had taken refuge in his bosom, and transformed the man into a fiend. He was the incarnation of the Jacquerie!

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CHAPTER XV.

THE afternoon sunlight was casting long shadows on the cleared and level space in front of the forest of Ermonne, but this spot formerly so quiet and peaceful now presented a very different aspect, for upon it was encamped the peasant army. The ground was covered with rude huts built of logs or underbrush, thatched with straw and rushes, or with leafy boughs alone. Imperfect as they were, they nevertheless afforded a sufficient shelter from the mid-summer heat, and those who lived in them were too well inured to hardships, to regard such slight discomforts as were more than counterbalanced by the joy they felt at having shaken off the fetters of the nobles.

In those frail dwellings the peasants tasted the pleasures of a freedom unknown and undreamed of before, and abandoned themselves to the enjoyment of a fleeting liberty. The camp, if it could so be called, was unguarded and without discipline, and its inmates strolled carelessly about in search of amusement. Some were shooting at targets, some were hurling stones to test their strength and skill, others had thrown themselves upon the grass and were satisfied to rest idly in the shade. From the doors of the huts came the shrill cries of women who were preparing their evening meal, for there was no lack of food; forest and river yielded their tribute, and quantities of wine had been saved from the burning castles. An air of reckless security pervaded this camp of the

Jacquiers, from which arose at intervals wild bursts of laughter, mingled with howls and curses ; for no law was observed there but that of the strong hand. Strength of arm decided all contests, and the weak must submit to be robbed by those who were able to take from them what they coveted. Only constant employment could bind together this band of robbers, who fought with each other for what they had stolen, and their leader, well aware of this, did not mean to allow them to remain idle.

As he sat alone Guillaume Callet brooded darkly over the project he had conceived. Antoine Soulas, the mayor of Meux, had consented to an interview, and Jacques had gone to conduct him to the camp, or rather to the hut where Callet awaited his coming. This hut was within the forest, and stood upon the edge of a small stream that plunged into a ravine completely hidden by the thick growth of stunted trees and underbush that grew upon its margin. On two sides the approach was obstructed by a wall of rock, that sloped away from the sides of this hut that nestled at its foot, and then rose perpendicularly to the height of some forty feet. The upper part of this rock was smooth and bare, but near its base were crevices and spots of soil sufficient to give root to trees, which, growing at an angle, overhung the hut and concealed it from above. It could be approached from the edge of the forest, in front of which lay the peasants' camp, but Callet was far too cunning to allow them to discover another path that led through the tangled growth of the ravine, and up the bed of the small stream that fell into it. Jacques alone was aware of this path ; it was by this that he had left the camp to go to Paris and urge Marcel to fulfil his promises, and by this route he was now conducting the mayor of Meux to his interview with Callet.

Thus their various negotiations were carried on without the knowledge of the peasants, who were kept in ignorance of the means employed to induce others to join them. This, however, only served to increase their respect for a leader who could procure friends without apparent effort, and in some mysterious way which they were unable to understand. Then, too, he had known how to inflame their minds, to rekindle the fire of hatred that began to smoulder in their breasts, and when he told them that the citizens of Paris and of Meux would aid them, they demanded to be led at once against the latter town, by whose capture Callet assured them they would deal a death-blow to the pride of their former masters. But although he asserted that the success of this attack was certain, he was far from feeling confident of it, for he knew that the city was too strong to yield to him, unless he was aided by treachery from within its walls. Could he induce the mayor to betray his trust, and how? this was the problem that occupied his mind as he waited for the coming of his emissary.

It was already dusk when Jacques appeared leading Antoine Soulas by the hand, for he had carefully blindfolded him before conducting him through the secret path. Removing the bandage from his eyes, Jacques addressed Soulas in a harsh voice :

"Here is our leader, Guillaume Callet," he said, "make your bargain with him, Master Mayor, and be sure it is a good one for yourself !"

"Trust me for that," returned Soulas ; "and so this is the great Callet, the captain of the peasants. All France has heard of your deeds, brave captain ; I do you reverence as the champion of the people !" and he bowed low before this man, who stood looking at him from under-

neath his bushy eyebrows with a mingled air of distrust and contempt. He held out his hand, however, and pointing to a block of wood, asked his visitor to sit down.

The mayor seated himself and Callet placed himself beside him, while Jacques stood opposite to them; thus they prepared to hold their conference, but before beginning it they regarded each other with furtive glances, as though each would penetrate the thoughts of the other. The mayor was a small man and insignificant in his person. A low forehead was surmounted by curly brown hair, his face was pale and thin, and his greenish eyes wandered restlessly about without fixing themselves upon any object, and yet taking note of all. His drooping lower lip exhibited a row of yellow teeth, that adorned a mouth distorted by a perpetual smile; his feeble chin betokened the weakness of his character, and his movements had a servility that aroused the contempt of these peasants who had been slaves.

No greater contrast could be imagined than that between Antoine Soulas and the man who sat beside him. Of almost Herculean stature, the powerful figure of the peasant might have been taken for an antique model of physical development, had it not been for the fatal droop of his neck and shoulders—the heritage of bondage. There was character in his face, but it was that which repelled and made one shudder. His forehead too was low, and encroached upon by the coarse black hair that fell in matted locks upon his shoulders. His massive square cut chin showed the determination of which he was capable, but his lips and mouth proved that his will was subject to his passions, while the burning light within his eyes, and their stealthy sidelong glances reminded one of a treacherous animal that seeks to fascinate, before

springing upon its victim. Jacques was the first to break the silence, which he did with a loud laugh.

"Ho ho," he cried, "why do you stare thus, like two strange dogs ready to fly at each others' throats! I think you would have the worst at that game, Master Mayor," he added, with a grin.

Soulas started, but quickly replied: "You are right, friend. I should be but a mouthful for this brave captain; he could crush me with two of his fingers."

Callet smiled contemptuously, as he said: "That is not what you came here to talk about. Tell me whether you are on our side or against us."

"Why," replied Soulas, "that is according to circumstances; that depends, my captain, on whether we can agree."

"What do you mean, and what do you want?"

"I? Oh, very little. I want you to be quite satisfied, and your good people, too; but there are preliminaries, captain, and we must adjust them."

"I know not what you mean," returned Callet, impatiently.

"There are preliminary arrangements to be made," continued Soulas, with a pompous air, rolling out the words as though he knew his listeners did not understand them, "that is to say," he went on, waving his hand and smiling in a condescending manner, "that is to say, we must not act hastily: we must consider; we must have articles of agreement and the writing of a notary."

"To the devil with your long words, and tell me plainly whether you will open the gates."

Startled by the savage tone in which this demand was made, Soulas stammered and turned pale. Jacques grinned: "Ho, ho!" said he, "you had best not trifle

with Guillaume I can tell you, Master Mayor, or it will be the worse for you ! ”

“ Trifle with you, good Master Jacques ! and you, my brave captain ? ” answered Soulas, rubbing his trembling hands. “ O, no, not for the world, not for the whole world indeed, my master ! ”

“ Why do you not answer then, ” and Callet spoke in a milder tone, for he was fearful of defeating the object he had in view, and did not wish to terrify the little mayor, who was evidently alarmed already.

“ Come, you must not mind our rough ways, for Jacques and I be plain men, and not used to fine words ; but we mean no harm and want to be your friends. Tell us then whether you will open the gates for us ; that is all we want to know. ”

Jacques nodded approval. “ That is the question, master, only answer it and we shall know what to do. ”

Soulas moved uneasily on his seat. He was unwilling to come to the point at once, but he saw that these men understood no phrases, and that they wanted to know whether he would betray Meux, and upon what terms. Now he had determined to have a rich reward for this service, and that having obtained it, he would fly the country. His was one of those avaricious souls that thirsts for gold, and does not scruple to sell itself to the devil to gain it. To lay his hands on a goodly amount of the treasure he knew to be within the city, he was prepared to betray the trust reposed in him, and abandon the inhabitants to the fury of a horde of savages ; but he was not ready to fix the price of his treachery. While he was reflecting, and trying to decide upon the exact sum he should demand, Callet tried to restrain his impatience : finally he asked the mayor whether he had

made up his mind. Soulas turned his uneasy eyes upon him, and his mouth trembled as he replied :

"Yes, my brave captain, I have, and I hope you will be pleased with my decision."

"Well then, will you open the gates?"

The voice of the mayor shook as he answered : "Yes, I will—but—"

"But what?"

"You cannot expect me to do so, unless—unless I receive some advantage," said Soulas, hesitatingly.

"But," rejoined Callet, "you said you were a friend of the people : you will serve them by letting them enter Meux ; is that not reward enough ? and then," continued he, his brow darkening, "you will be revenged upon the nobles ; does that count for nothing, or do you love them, Master Mayor?"

"No, no, valiant captain, I love them not, and care not what torments you make them suffer, but I am a man of peace and do not love shedding blood myself."

"Ho ! then you want to be paid?"

"Yes, captain, so please you."

"But how am I to pay you," demanded Callet, "I have no gold."

"Ah !" said Soulas, drawing a long breath, and the smile that overspread his face grew greedy as he spoke. "Ah, brave captain, I can show you enough gold to enrich your whole army, and make you a prince ! and if you will give me a small portion for my own, a reasonable sum—"

"You will open the gates of Meux?"

"Yes, my captain, yes, Master Jacques."

"Now we know at last what you want," growled Jacques with an oath.

"How much shall we give you," asked Callet. "Come, let us finish, but remember that without us you could never touch a *dénier* of this treasure, so be *moderate* and we will try to satisfy you. Now, let us hear the price you ask."

"Ten thousand crowns of gold!" said Soulas.

Upon hearing this, both the peasants uttered an exclamation of astonishment. To them it was a sum so enormous as to be beyond their comprehension. They looked at each other, and then turned their glances upon the mayor, who was more composed. But his composure vanished before the angry looks of his companions, who addressed him in tones of fury.

"Do you mock us!" cried both together.

"Have you come to make sport of us?" demanded Callet, "by the devil, it shall be a sorry jest!"

"I will make my axe acquainted with your neck!" thundered Jacques. Soulas made an effort to command himself, though his teeth chattered with fear, as he said:

"Softly, softly, my good masters, be not so violent but listen to me a moment, and you shall see that I am not mocking you, or jesting: how should I dare do that, my masters? Have patience then, while I explain, and you will see. O yes, you will see that I mean well, and am not unreasonable."

"But ten thousand crowns!" exclaimed Callet, "you are mad, you have lost your wits! There is not so much gold in the whole world!"

Soulas smiled at this ignorance. One could see the gleam of his yellow teeth by the light of the torch stuck in the ground in the centre of the hut, but he did not dare to laugh aloud, and his voice was smooth and obsequious as he said: "Brave captain, and you, good Master Jac-

ques, do not think I would tell you a lie, or seek to deceive men who have performed such great deeds ; and I swear by the bones of St. Faron, that there is in Meux gold enough to fill this hut ten times. All the nobles carried their treasure thither, and their wives have store of rich jewels. This wealth, then, I will place in your hands, and of it I ask for myself but ten thousand crowns, —'tis a pitiful portion, indeed, my masters."

"What part of the whole treasure would it be?" asked Callet, who was somewhat appeased, "how many heaps of ten thousand crowns would there be in all?"

The mayor was amused at this singular method of reckoning, but pretended to make a careful calculation, and replied that the entire treasure would make about five hundred heaps, each of ten thousand crowns in value.

The two peasants gazed at each other, and made no effort to conceal their surprise. "If this be true" said Callet, "what you ask is not so unreasonable, and you shall have it."

"There may be a trifle less or more, but you would not blame me if there should not be the exact amount?"

"No, Master Mayor, if there is one half as much as you say, you will deserve your portion!"

"That he will!" exclaimed Jacques, clapping him on the shoulder, "and so you like gold better than revenge, my master?"

"Yes, good Jacques, far better," returned Soulas, "but you, my brave captains, will have both, and that is better still. Ha, ha, much better!" Having arrived at an understanding, they seated themselves around a rough table, upon which Jacques placed both food and wine. They discussed their plans at length, and determined that the force sent from Paris should be admitted into

Meux, instead of joining Callet's army, for the mayor declared that the Provost's men would be of more service if they were allowed to enter the city secretly, and before the peasants, whom they could afterward join. Callet agreed to this, and as Sôulas was in haste to return, he was again blindfolded and conducted through the ravine by Jacques, who then set him free upon the high-road leading to the city.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next day was the anniversary of the founding of the commune of Meux. The streets were crowded with citizens, who, with their wives and daughters, all in gala dress, followed the procession on its way to the town-hall. In front marched the members of the council, headed by the mayor in his civic robes. Around his neck was a silver chain to which was attached a small cross, which he raised devoutly to his lips whenever the procession halted. The little mayor was more at his ease than he had been in the presence of Guillaume Callet, and congratulated himself on the good bargain he had made with him. His cat-like eyes fastened themselves upon the rich armor of the knights, who reined in their horses and watched this celebration with a disdainful air; nor did he fail to mark the gleam of silk and cloth of gold, and the flash of jewels, as he passed beneath the windows where noble ladies sat smiling scornfully at this display of civic freedom. In his heart he wished it were possible for him to wrench away those gems, to seize the golden chains, to clutch and hold the wealth that dazzled his eyes which he cast in feigned humility upon the ground, only raising them for a covert and hasty look at the objects of his desire.

"Patience," he said to himself, "let me have but patience, and I will soon share the spoil of these proud dames and lords who ruffle it so gayly; and then I will away to some land where I may feast my eyes with

gold!" His hands trembled as they lifted the cross, and he moistened his dry lips like a hungry animal, who sees before him food which he longs to snatch, but dares not. At length they reached the town-hall which the mayor entered, followed by the council, and as many citizens as could force their way in. A clerk unlocks a coffer, and taking from it the city charter, hands it to the little mayor, who draws himself up to the full height of his insignificant figure as he receives it. As he slowly unrolls the precious manuscript, he is fully conscious of its importance and of the dignity of his own position. He swells his breast, and puffs out his thin cheeks, as he reads in a high, shrill voice, and as he nears the end he pauses, glancing complacently about, while he toys with his silver chain a moment before concluding in as impressive a manner as he can assume :

"And these aforesaid privileges and immunities are hereby granted by us, to our faithful vassals and subjects, the good citizens of our town of Meux, to be held and enjoyed by them and their descendants forever, upon the conditions herein and aforesaid.

Given at our city of Meux — 1179.

Signed { Henri, Comte of Champagne and Brie.
Marie.
Henri le Jeune.

"Citizens," said the mayor, "we have assembled according to our ancient custom, and have heard the words of the charter establishing our commune, and granting us civic freedom and immunities, which we are entitled to maintain and enjoy forever, we and our children, by the free gift and grace of our most noble lord count, who is departed. May his soul rest in Paradise!"

He then returned the document to the clerk, who replaced it in the coffer, and the crowd dispersed. As he

left the hall he was accosted by a nobleman who reined in his horse and signed to the mayor to approach. He obeyed the signal with alacrity, running forward with so much haste as to stumble over his robe. Recovering himself, he bowed to the ground as the marquis de la Rivière addressed him.

"Soho! Master Mayor, you have been mumbling over your mouldy old charter again! do you not yet know it by heart, that you must come here with a crowd at your heels, and holiday garb on your back?"

"'Tis our ancient privilege, so please you, most mighty lord."

"Ancient privilege! ancient folly, you should say," returned the marquis, "you would be better employed in your shops, or if you must needs go in solemn procession; trudge to the tomb of St. Faron, and pay your devotion at his shrine where miracles can be performed."

"By your favor, most noble Marquis, I will to the Abbey church, and pray the saint to deliver us from the hands of the peasants," answered Soulas humbly.

The marquis laughed. "Away with you, then, and wear your knees to the bone at his tomb. Methinks, knave, your dear city would fare ill, an it had no better defence against Guillaume Callet than your bourgeois prayers. Thank your patron saint, Mayor, that he has not abandoned you to so weak a guard as a dead man's bones! thank him that there are noble swords here to protect his tomb from desecration, and his city from destruction!"

"I will, my lord! O yes, I will bless him for sending us a leader, the sound of whose name would cause an army to fly."

"Call not me your leader, knave, I am no leader of

such as you," returned the marquis frowning. "But be-gone to your prayers, and hark ye, Master Mayor, let me see no more of these idle mummeries or my men-at-arms shall clear the streets with the butt ends of their spears,"—and spurring his horse, he dashed forward, nearly over-turning the mayor, who stood by the charger's shoulder.

The marquis de la Rivière, like most of the nobles of the time, took no pains to conceal his contempt for the people, but his contempt would have been mingled with distrust had he seen the bitter smile that overspread the features of Antoine Soulas, as he gazed after his retreating form. The mayor still stood with his body bowed down, in the same attitude of abject humiliation in which he had listened to the scornful words flung to him as a bone is flung to a dog. But as the dog crouches before the lash, yet dares to show his teeth and growl as soon as his master's back is turned, so this man ground and gnashed his yellow teeth, muttering curses as he raised himself and walked away. Reaching his own house he locked himself into his room, and gave way to the rage he dared not indulge before the eyes of others. His pale face was covered with beads of perspiration, his narrow forehead contracted with wrinkles, his hands clenched, and his hideous mouth with its drooping lip gave him a venomous aspect. He rushed about the room like a wild man, overturning everything that came in his way; he beat his fists and even his head against the walls, uttering inarticulate howls, and biting his lips until they were covered with drops of blood and foam. Presently he recovered himself, the fit appeared to leave him, his features gradually composed themselves, and he threw himself into a seat, drawing his breath at first in gasps, and then in long, trembling sighs, as though thoroughly

exhausted. After resting for a moment, he went to a corner of the room and plunged his head into a large basin of cold water, laving his face and neck ; then seating himself again, he leaned his head upon his hands, remaining in that posture for some time. When he looked up all trace of the frenzy had vanished ; his features had relaxed and presented the same crafty, greedy and repulsive appearance as usual.

"We shall see," he muttered, "we shall see whether your noble swords are strong enough to save you from the peasant axe. I am no man of blood, and yet I would like well, proud marquis of Rivière, to see you on your knees, your neck upon the block, and I to strike the blow that would roll your head in the dust ! I, the mayor, am a knave and varlet, and fit to mumble prayers, and our city charter is but folly in your eyes, and we but fools to be scourged from our own streets ! Fools, forsooth ; I should be fool indeed to lose the gold the peasant promised, for the sake of those who count us as the creeping things beneath their feet ! Ten thousand crowns ! Aha, 'tis a goodly sum ! But I trust not this Guillaume Callet : no, no, I must make sure that he does not cheat me. Ha, ha, I need not fear that the dull peasant will overreach one like me. How I wish the day were come ! Oh, how I wish—but patience, it will not be long, though it seems long until I see the glitter of my darling gold. Ah, where will I conceal it until I find means to fly ? Ten thousand crowns ! ha, ha ! but yet I should have *more* than that : I, who will open the gates, yes more, and jewels, some few jewels I must have, and I know where to find them—Oh, how they sparkle ! I can see them now before me ! But softly, let me be sure and trust no one, lest I lose all. Aha ! trust none, trust

none!" and Soulas rubbed his hands and laughed gleefully. While he was thus engaged in gloating over the riches to be acquired by his treachery, he had left his seat and walked up and down murmuring to himself. Presently he stopped, went to the door, tried the lock, and placing his ear against the panels, listened carefully: then with a noiseless, stealthy tread he crossed the room, and stopped before a figure of the Virgin that stood upon a little pedestal against the wall. He knelt down before this, and leaning forward, stretched out his hands; but it was not to supplicate the Madonna, for he seizes her image, and removing it, places it with little reverence upon the floor, not even bestowing a glance on the sacred figure as it lies face downward. His eyes are fixed on the place it had occupied, and his fingers tremble with eagerness as he passes them along the smooth surface of the wall, that is dark and discolored by numerous stains. These stains seemed to have been caused by damp, or mildew, and a careful glance would not have detected the secret spring that they concealed. But Antoine Soulas did not need to look for the spot that attracted his fingers as the magnet attracts the needle, and to which they could easily find their way in the darkest night. His eyes leave the wall and wander suspiciously about the room, while he finds and presses upon the spring that opens a hidden door, and discloses a small recess where he conceals his hoards. Still upon his knees on the low pedestal of the Virgin, he plunges both his arms into the open space; he clutches the coins and holds them up to see them glitter, he presses his lips to them, and listens as he drops them one by one; their ringing is the sweetest music to him: he piles them up in little heaps and drags himself away to gaze on them,

then throws himself forward and seizing, hugs them in his arms, as though he fears they will escape; he talks to them as though they were living things. "Ah, my precious treasures, my glittering darlings, you are mine, mine! Are you lonesome here when I am away? Patience then, and you shall have companions. Yes, do you hear, ten thousand more to keep you company; ha, ha, my children! and then you shall go with me, and no longer hide yourselves in this dark hole. Oh, no, for I will build a chamber for you where you may see the sun—but no one else, my darlings, only the sun and me!"

While he was grovelling before his shrine a loud knock sounded on the door. He raised himself impatiently and began to replace the coins; his fingers lingered over them as he put them back, but a second summons warned him to make haste, and he completed his task swiftly, noiselessly closed the secret door and restored the Virgin to her place; then looking to see that no sign remained, he stood up, and walked softly to the door where a third knock now resounded. Giving one more suspicious glance around him, he drew back the bolts and demanded what was wanted.

A messenger stood without. "Good Mayor," said he, "you are wanted instantly at the gate, where our Lord Bishop is about to make his entry. Haste! haste!" and he dragged the startled Soulas after him into the street.

In his anger and subsequent abstraction, the mayor had entirely forgotten the part he was to perform in the ceremony of which he was so rudely reminded, and he hurried after the messenger, trembling with fear of what might result from his thoughtlessness. When he arrived panting and out of breath with the speed he had

made, he found a great crowd assembled, but the bishop had not yet appeared, and Soulas breathed more freely at escaping the severe reprimand he knew he would have received, had his negligence kept him waiting before his cathedral city. Among the nobles who awaited the coming of the bishop the mayor perceived the marquis de la Rivière, and shrunk back into the crowd, hoping to escape his observation, but in vain, for the stern glance of the marquis fell upon him, and pushing his horse forward he beckoned to him. "Mayor," he said, "you have been long at your prayers, and you should have been first where you are the last to come hither. 'Tis well you lingered no longer, sirrah !"

"I humbly crave your pardon, noble Marquis," replied Soulas, bowing his head before the angry glance thrown upon him. "I—I was so engaged in prayer, that I gave no heed to the passing time." The marquis laughed. "Ha ! I knew not that you were such a holy man ! Absorbed in prayer, forsooth ! St. Mary defend us ! 'Tis like you mean to take orders."

Soulas folded his hands and replied with an expression of deep humility, "I would I were worthy of such great honor, but—"

"But you are a sinful man" interrupted de la Rivière. "Yes, I know it well, and a hypocrite to boot, with your sanctimonious face. Hark ye, Mayor, 'tis said you hoard up gold. Soho !" he exclaimed, as Soulas started, "do I touch you there ? and I well believe it," he continued, "and that you come by it in no honest way. I care not though you be a miser, but other things are whispered of you, sirrah, and if they prove true, you shall swing from the windows of your own town-hall ; therefore mark well what you are about and beware !"

The knees of the mayor knocked against each other, and his mind was busy in wondering whether his schemes could have been betrayed as he stammered forth a few words of denial, which the marquis listened to with an incredulous smile upon his lips.

"You may swear by all the saints," he said scornfully, "and yet would not I believe you ; but again I bid you beware if you love your life ! Get you to the gate now with the keys, for I see the bishop is approaching."

Soulas hurried to the gate which he threw open, and retiring among the crowd of citizens, he followed their example and threw himself on his knees. The knights dismounted and resigning their horses to their pages, waited until the bishop came opposite to them, when they dropped upon one knee, rising again after he had passed by. The bishop was seated in a gorgeous litter covered with a canopy of silk. He was dressed in the rich vestments of his office, and was borne by the four noble vassals of his see, according to the ancient and especial privilege belonging to the prelates of Meux. The noble bearers were clad in plain but beautiful armor, and wore a cross upon their breasts. Their heads were bare, their helmets being carried by the pages who followed them. As they passed slowly on, the knights with the marquis de la Rivière at their head remounted their horses, and formed in line behind the litter. The citizens followed on foot, and the procession swept along to the cathedral where the bishop was to celebrate high mass. That tedious service over, the Prelate was escorted to his residence, where he bestowed his blessing on the faithful multitude, and the people who had testified their respect for their spiritual lord, were at length free to disperse. The mayor, half dead from fatigue and the excitement he had

undergone, was glad to find himself once more at the door of his own dwelling, but as he was about to go in, a hand was laid upon his robe. Turning quickly he confronted a man who said : " Good Master Mayor, I must have a few words with you."

" And who are you ? " grumbled Soulas, who would have been thankful to escape, lock himself in and indulge his ill humor. " Who are you who have followed me here ? "

" I followed you," replied the stranger, " because it was the easiest way to find your house."

" Well, well, would not to-morrow serve your turn ? I am tired ; I have had a busy day. First there was the reading of our charter and the civic procession, then the entry of our Lord Bishop and high mass to be attended, and I must be present at all and much besides. I am weary I say ! Come again to-morrow."

But the stranger persisted, " I am sure, master," he said, " that when you look at this, you will listen to me," and he drew forth a small parchment with a few words scrawled upon it ; beneath was the signature of Etienne Marcel. Soulas looked at it. " You may come in," said he, and he led the way to the room he had quitted so abruptly some hours before. " What is your name ? " he demanded, looking suspiciously at his unwelcome visitor.

" Pierre Gilles, master."

" And you say that the Provost sent you hither ? "

" Yes," replied Pierre, for he it was, " and I must return to-night."

" What message did the worshipful Provost send to me ? "

" He bade me tell you that some of the stout citizens of Paris would march this way before long, and he looks to have you find them good entertainment."

Soulas rubbed his hands together and laughed as he answered: "It may be there will be no lack of entertainment; but how many guests will there be, and when am I to expect them?"

"That is for you to say, master, and our Provost asks you to fix the time; but he says it must be soon or not at all."

"Ha, ha! is it so? The worshipful Provost is in haste then?"

"I know naught of that," rejoined Pierre, "only he bade me say that you must decide all to-night, and send him word, or he would draw back."

Soulas thought a moment. He knew how eager the peasants were to attack the city, his bargain was made with them and no good could come of longer delay, which might deprive him of the assistance Marcel had promised to give. The biting words of the marquis de la Rivière, and his threats alarmed him. He was already suspected and he knew that the marquis would hardly wait to have his suspicion become a certainty, before consigning him to the hangman. And then, the reward promised by Callet!

He passed his hand across his brow, for a sudden dizziness came over him, as he thought how soon he might clutch this gold. But how to make certain of securing it, after the peasants were once in possession of the town? This was what he could not clearly see, for he had only the word of Callet and of Jacques, and how did he know whether they would keep their promise. The doubt caused him a throb of pain. Suddenly an idea occurred to him, a means of securing the treasure he was so fearful of losing, and he turned to Pierre. "Friend," he

said, "do you know who is to lead the citizens from Paris?"

"That I do, master, for our Provost says I shall lead them myself."

"Good, you are young, but I doubt not you are a brave youth," said Soulas. "Hast ever seen this Callet or his friend, him he calls Jacques?"

"Not I."

"Well, think you they will share with you and your fellows?" asked Soulas.

"They *must*, master, or we will make them—let them refuse if they dare. I warrant we will give them a lesson that will teach them to remember the butchers of Paris!"

"Listen to me," said Soulas. "These peasants are an army, and you will be but few; if they refuse to let you share with them you cannot help yourselves. I can show you how to make sure of what you seize in spite of them, but you must deceive them or they will cheat you."

"We will make them feel our axes then. We will not be cheated I tell you," growled Pierre.

"They are fierce and hard to control," continued the mayor, "and their leaders are so ignorant that one can hardly make them understand the most simple things; they do not even know the value of money; think of that, good youth, think of not knowing how much a thousand crowns would be!"

"Are they fools, these peasants, not to know the worth of money? What do they seek then, and why do they want to take Meux," asked Pierre.

"They want plunder, they want everything they can lay their hands on, but they want blood first of all. Mark me," and Soulas laid his hand on his companion's knee as he

spoke, "they want revenge and blood first, and gold afterward. Do you understand?"

"No," said Pierre, "may the devil fly away with me, if I know what you mean!"

"Have patience and I will show you, but first tell me why you mean to lead your brave citizens here. Is it not because if the nobles are to be plundered, you want to have a share of their gold and jewels as well as the peasants?"

"Yes, master, it is true; why should the peasants have all?"

"And," continued Soulas, "would you not be willing to let *them* kill, so you might plunder?"

Pierre began to be interested. "You are right," he said. "What we want is gold, and if we cannot earn it in these hard times, we must e'en take it by force."

"Ha, ha, good youth!" cried Soulas, patting him on the knee, "you are apt enough! Take it, yes, yes, and so you shall if you will be guided by me, for I know where there are heaps of gold. Oh, yes, I can lead you, but you must be guided by me, or you will get nothing," and he shook his head sadly.

"I am willing enough to follow you," rejoined Pierre, "but as to getting nothing when I am once here with my bold comrades, leave that to me, master!"

Soulas looked at him. "You forget" said he, "that there is a battle to be fought, and a bloody one, too, before the city can be plundered."

"But the peasants have fought before, why should they not succeed here where the nobles will be taken by surprise?" asked Pierre.

"If they can take the marquis de la Rivière at un-awares they may succeed; that is their only chance,"

answered Soulas slowly. "But, Master Gilles, be guided by me, and let the peasants fight the battle."

"We be no cowards!" exclaimed Pierre indignantly.

"I know it, but why should you fight when others will do it for you, and you can get the gold without? Now look you," said the mayor. "Lead your men hither on the morning of the *fête* of St. Celine, an hour before day; I will admit you at the old gate. You will conceal yourselves, and afterward I will let in the peasant army. They will attack the town, and take the nobles by surprise if possible. If they succeed they will kill, kill until they are weary, and meantime you and your fellows may plunder at your ease. Aha! how do you like my plan?"

"I like it," answered Pierre, "by St. Jacques, it is good!"

"Is it not?" cried Soulas. "And when you have secured the gold which I will show you where to find, then you and I will share and share alike; is it not so, good youth?"

"Yes, yes, master, with all my heart!"

"You would not grudge me the half of what we win together, nor let me be robbed of it, after I have shown you how to come at more treasure than you ever dreamed of?" and the mayor's little green eyes searched the face of his companion as he spoke. "No, oh no! indeed, you would not suffer me to be robbed, for you are a just youth, and will remember that Antoine Soulas showed you the road to wealth. You are young, Master Gilles, and know not yet the power of gold. 'Tis the best friend one can have, better than sweetheart or wife; but you will not believe that, ha ha! for at your age one has sweethearts, and takes more pleasure in their bright eyes than in the glitter

of golden crowns. But the golden crowns will purchase hearts. O yes, and if you bring your honest comrades here as I say, we will soon find what will make your love smile on you! Say then, will you be ruled by me?"

While speaking Soulas's avaricious spirit could be seen in his shining eyes, and in the nervous movements of his hands which opened and shut and clasped each other convulsively as he talked. Pierre watched him silently. He was intelligent enough to see that the man was a miser, and would barter his soul for gain, but he entered heartily into his plans and was cunning enough to hide his own thoughts.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was no longer possible for the vicomte d'Ervand to persuade himself that he was ill. His shoulder was perfectly healed and his arm as strong as ever, yet he lingered at the house of the wine-merchant. If Pierre Gilles, who had not by any means forgotten Jeanne Mailart, could have known how often and how tenderly the vicomte thought of her, his mind would have been ill at ease. As he returned from Meux he was busy in devising some way by which he might gain possession of her person if not of her heart, and he hoped to obtain enough gold from the plunder of the town, to make him a more acceptable suitor or to enable him to gain his end by more violent means.

But fortunately for him, he could not see the vicomte bending over Jeanne, pretending to examine very carefully the present that count Guy had sent her, while in truth, he was looking much more attentively at the white hand that held it, and the red lips that smiled so provokingly near. His good resolutions had taken flight, and he did not seek to recall them but allowed himself to enjoy the pleasure he found in the company of this young girl, whose gayety charmed him and whom he felt to be worthy of his respect. It is true that the recollection of how widely he was separated from one of her humble station obtruded itself upon his mind occasionally, but he banished the disagreeable thought as quickly as possible, or opposed it by drawing comparisons between some noble

ladies of his acquaintance, and Jeanne. Doubtless these were not always favorable to the former, and the vicomte must have known that he was doing wrong to indulge himself in such an amusement. However this may be, the inspection of the pin continued so long that Jeanne grew impatient. "I am tired of holding out my arm so long," she declared. "Why do you not say something, my lord? Is it not beautiful?"

"Very beautiful indeed, and so white!"

"Why 'tis not white, 'tis gold color, and see what pretty work upon it," she said, holding the pin up to the light.

"Ah!" replied the vicomte, looking at it for the first time; "yes, it is quite pretty."

"But a moment ago you said it was beautiful, and now you say it is only pretty," she exclaimed, with a pout of her red lips that d'Ervand thought extremely becoming.

He smiled as he replied: "But I meant your arm, Mistress Jeanne."

"Oh! Why, my lord, I was speaking to you about the pin that the count de la Roche sent to me."

"And I was not looking at it but at something far more lovely;" returned the vicomte smiling, and raising her fingers to his lips.

Jeanne blushed and drew her hand away. "You should not make sport of me, my lord," she said hesitatingly, "after I was so patient too, holding the pin for you to look at so long that my arm aches; and all the time you were—"

"Looking at something else," he said laughing.

"Yes, but if you do not care for this golden pin, I shall not let you see it any longer," and she thrust it into the scarf about her neck.

"My faith," rejoined the vicomte, "if you wish to hide it from me, you have chosen a charming place of conceal-

ment, for it shows there like a gleam of gold against a drift of snow ! But you must not think I mean to make sport of you, fair Jeanne. By St. Geneviève ! that would be very ungrateful after all your kindness ! Believe me I only spoke what I thought ; and I say you have the loveliest hand and arm in Paris, and the kindest heart, and the prettiest mouth, and the most graceful—”

It is impossible to say where he would have stopped, but Jeanne interrupted him, her face suffused with blushes : “Oh, my lord, indeed, indeed you must not talk so. It is not true, and you—I—” and she covered her face with her hands to hide her confusion. She was not altogether unused to compliments, but the impulsive manner of her companion embarrassed her for a moment. However, she soon recovered her composure, and the vicomte’s smiling face completely reassured her, as soon as she gained courage enough to look up. She glanced timidly at him, and there was a half reproachful look in her eyes as they met his.

“Why do you look at me so, fair Jeanne ?” he asked gently, “have I said anything to offend you ?”

“No, my lord, how should you say aught to offend a simple maiden. Only you should not—It is not right for you—”

“What is not right, my pretty Jeanne ?”

“Oh,” she answered, smiling again, “it is wrong for you to seek to make me vain. But would you believe it, my father says I am even now more vain than—Oh, than my bird René, who sits for hours smoothing his feathers, and tossing his head from side to side to see his plumage glisten in the sun.”

“Truly I believe he says so, since you tell me ; but then it is his way of jesting.”

“Do you think so?” she asked demurely.

“Yes, fair Jeanne.”

“But perhaps it is really true, and I am certain—”

“What are you so certain of, Jeanne?”

“That I will be as vain—as vain as anything, if I stay longer here, and it will be your fault, my lord, so I shall run away,” and before he could prevent her, she had sprung across the room and disappeared.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHILE the vicomte recovered from the baron's sword thrust, under the magic influence of his pretty nurse, count Guy had not altogether neglected the opportunity afforded him by the Sire de Coucy. And in truth, his visits to Yolande were quite as frequent as would, in all probability, have seemed necessary to her father. The admiration which he felt for her soon became a warmer feeling, and deepened into love so rapidly, that before he was well aware of his danger, Guy found himself borne helplessly along upon a tide that he could not, or would not, at least, did not, resist.

Nor can it be denied that Yolande thought of him more often than she would willingly have confessed. As she sat alone one afternoon, vaguely wondering whether Guy had forgotten that she was alone, and chiding herself for the thought that came unbidden, she heard his step; and starting from her reverie, rose hurriedly to receive him. There was a smile of welcome on her lips, and as Guy bent to kiss her hand, she exclaimed, "Now Saint Mary be praised for sending you hither, for even Bertrand has deserted me, and shut himself up alone to complete your horoscope! I begged him to show it me," she added laughing, "but he made so many excuses, that I soon gave up all hope of satisfying my curiosity."

"I hope it will be favorable," said Guy.

"You may be sure it will, if Bertrand can coax the stars to gratify his wishes; for you are becoming a great favor-

ite of his, Count. But you had best beware or you will have me for an enemy, and I warn you that I shall be a dangerous rival."

"I well believe it, and shall not dare to enter the lists with you and run a course for Bertrand's love."

"Saint Mary for Coucy!" cried Yolande, gayly, "I should overthrow you without mercy!"

"If you were to ride unarmed, you would vanquish the bravest knight who ever laid spear in rest," returned Guy, smiling.

"But I should wear steel from head to foot, my dear Count. Oh, you need not laugh, for I know how to couch a lance, and I should aim it, let me see, at your helmet I think, and then—*Bonne grace notre dame!*"

"Aim at my breast and I own myself conquered; but in truth dear lady Yolande, your beautiful eyes will count more victims than your lance, and so you ride unhelmeted, one had need wear armor of proof to defend his heart!"

"You must leave yours unguarded then; you are very rash, Count Guy, to expose yourself to such danger," and Yolande turned her laughing eyes full upon him.

"Some dangers are so pleasant that we seek instead of avoiding them," he replied.

But Yolande, who possibly did not understand his meaning, abruptly changed the conversation. "Is it not a shame," she cried, "that I must stay here so long alone? It is so dull, I declare, my dear Count, that I sometimes wish for a tumult in the streets, or a flood—for anything to amuse me. If the students would but dress themselves in outlandish garb, and march through the streets as they did last year, or the cathedral take fire, or the Provost's new wall tumble down—if something would but happen to cause a little excitement!"

"I confess it is hard," answered Guy, "and I do not wonder that you grow restless. But I heard you singing as I came in; does that not amuse you?"

"One cannot sing all day," replied Yolande, "and there is nothing else for me to do, except to bend over this embroidery or listen to Bertrand."

"Do you not like to hear him read then?"

"Oh yes, but I am not always in the mood; and then, he scorns all minstrel's tales, and says 'tis a waste of time to listen to them. But now that he is not here," continued Yolande, "I wish you would repeat some story. I know you can if you will, my dear Count. Come, do not refuse me."

"How do you know I can recall a story you would care to hear?" asked Guy with a smile, and seating himself at her feet, he looked up at the lovely face of the young girl, thinking that no *jongleur* ever had a fairer subject for his song, and devoutly wishing that he possessed the minstrel's gift.

"You shall not escape me by asking questions," said she, glancing merrily at her companion, "so begin at once—for if you do not, Bertrand will come, and then you know he will want to show you your horoscope, and I shall lose my story!"

"But what shall it be about," asked Guy, who was somewhat embarrassed by this sudden demand, and feared his invention would hardly prove equal to the emergency.

"Oh! anything, Count, tell me a legend of your house."

"Shall I tell you of the conversion of Ogier? but I fear you will find it dull, and wish I had not come to interrupt your song."

"Tell it me at once," said Yolande. "Saint Mary! it cannot be more tedious than this embroidery!"

Guy laughed, and was about to relate the legend of Ogier, when he was interrupted by the entrance of Anton, who brought an urgent message from the vicomte d'Ervand begging the count to join him at the Cerf Blanc as he had received tidings of importance. Guy arose reluctantly enough from the half-reclining position he had taken at Yolande's feet.

"You must listen to my tale at another time," he said, "I fear that I must leave you, dear Yolande."

"But then I shall lose my story, Count Guy. Come, it cannot be necessary for you to go so soon, and we have not yet arranged about my journey to Coucy. When are we to set out and how and where? Truly 'tis unkind for you to desert me thus, the moment that I begin to forget how I am mewed up in this gloomy place. Do you not know, Count Guy (and she spoke with a pretty petulance), that 'tis your duty to make me forget this tiresome tapestry work, these dull days, and that wicked baron de Roye?"

"I wish to Heaven," returned Guy, "that I might guard you from every disagreeable and evil thing. I would that I could guide the sun and influence the stars, the winds, the clouds—" he stopped abruptly.

"And what then, my dear Count?"

"Ah! then," said he, impetuously, "the sun should ever shine on you, the winds breathe softly, and the stars look graciously upon you, and see themselves reflected in your eyes! All happiness, all pleasant things should be for you to choose from, though by my faith! nature has been bounteous to you, dear Yolande, and bestowed on you the richest jewels in her casket," and Guy bent over her white hand, pressing his lips upon it. A faint blush stole

over face and throat and neck as Yolande listened, but before she could reply, Bertrand came forward, holding out a parchment.

"Here is your horoscope, my lord," he said. "I am glad to say that it is favorable," and a benignant smile overspread his face as he spoke. There was a moment's pause.

"Did I not say it would be favorable, my dear Count?" asked Yolande, recovering her composure. "How did you persuade the stars to be auspicious, Bertrand? Come, confess," she added, laughing, "confess now, that you wheedled them!"

But Bertrand darted an indignant look at her, and deigned no reply, while the count, taking the horoscope, thrust it in his breast, muttering some words of thanks as he did so. He then requested Bertrand to make all needful preparation for a sudden departure, as it might be best for them to leave Paris at once, and promising to see them speedily, made his adieux without further delay.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE disorderly band led by Pierre Gilles had left the city, and the count de la Roche quitted the hostelry soon after daybreak to hasten the preparations of master Bertrand. But he found, much to his satisfaction, that the latter was already equipped; two well-armed servants were in waiting, and four horses stood caparisoned for the road. Lady Yolande quickly made her appearance and Guy dismounted to lift her into her saddle. She wore a violet riding dress which was embroidered with silver, and so fashioned as to admirably serve the purpose for which it was intended, that of enabling her to sit her horse with perfect freedom. It is true that it also displayed to some advantage the proportions of a very lovely figure. Over this dress was thrown a short cloak of velvet lined with rose-colored satin: her dark blue hood, also worked with silver, did not entirely conceal the bright brown hair it covered, and a gold embroidered belt in which was thrust a dagger, completed her costume. It is certain that count Guy thought her the most charming page in the world, as placing himself at her side, but slightly in advance, he directed his little troop through the streets and beyond the barriers. He anticipated some difficulty in leaving the city, and was relieved to find that he was not questioned or detained at the gate, nor was he sorry to be joined outside the walls by the men-at-arms whom he had ordered to meet him there. About twenty in number, these were drawn up in good

order, and the morning sun flashed from the polished surface of their armor and weapons, as the count and his little party reined in their horses opposite them. Their leader, Rigaud, advanced and saluted Guy, who signed to Lanard, and after a hasty conference, directed the troop to be formed in such a manner as to allow them to make as much speed as possible, while at the same time, they provided against being surprised. The lady Yolande, the old physician and the two servants were placed in the centre. Rigaud was directed to remain in the rear and take general charge of the party, while Guy placed himself in front with Lanard who was thoroughly familiar with the roads. In this fashion they set forward, and Guy was in excellent spirits at finding himself once more on horseback and in the open country. There was little danger to be apprehended in so short a journey, though the roads were scoured by stragglers from the free companies; ruffians lawless enough to seize whatever or whoever fell in their way. They were, however, usually in search of booty, and Guy thought it unlikely that they would attack so strong a party, since, in doing so, they would certainly obtain more hard blows than plunder. Still he was anxious to avoid a collision with these marauders, and as they rode onward he did not relax the vigilance with which he scanned the roads, though he occasionally resigned this duty to the practised eye of Lanard, and rode by the side of Yolande, who, exhilarated by her release from the confinement she had found so hard to bear, and flushed with the excitement of her favorite exercise, could scarcely restrain her delight. The grace and ease with which she managed her spirited horse, her sparkling eyes, and ringing laughter as something strange or ludicrous attracted her attention, charmed

the young count, and he would gladly have remained at the bridle rein of his fair companion, though he was forced to content himself with brief visits to the spot where he would willingly have lingered. His watchfulness and tender regard for her comfort were not unnoticed however, and not unrewarded, if smiles and glances have the value sometimes attributed to them.

On the afternoon of the second day they were approaching the end of their journey, when Guy, feeling that there was no longer any necessity for such excessive caution, yielded to the entreaties of Yolande who begged to be allowed to ride forward with him to a rising ground, from which she could point out the towers of the chateau then not more than two leagues distant.

They soon left their party behind, and were following a path that ran beside a little stream called the Ailette, when their attention was attracted by a heron that rose suddenly from the sedgy bank before them. They followed his flight with eager eyes, and increased their speed to keep as long as possible within view of the game they had so often pursued with hawk on wrist. Finally they lost sight of it, as the heron with a slow, circling motion plunged into a distant marsh and disappeared, and they reined in their horses to find themselves far in advance of their escort, and some distance beyond the hill they wished to ascend, and which they had left to their right. Turning, they began to retrace their steps, moving at a slow pace in order to breathe the horses. Yolande's cheek was flushed with pleasure, and she replied merrily to the count as he praised her bold and skilful riding, adding that he hoped they would enjoy many such gallops when provided with falcons and dogs to bring down their game.

"I hope we shall indeed," she said; "but while these weary wars continue, and one is afraid to venture beyond sight of the castle, there is little opportunity for falconry or any other sport. Heigh-ho! I wish my father were at home, for I fear you will think the entertainment I can afford you but very tiresome," and she glanced at Guy, sighing a little as she thought that his companionship had been very pleasant, and remembered that it was impossible for him to remain at Coucy.

"Now by our Lady," cried he, "I ask no greater favor of Heaven than to be near you, dear Yolande, to live for a kind glance from those beautiful eyes, and to die in your defence!"

"Ah! but you will soon forget, after you return to Paris, and in the wars you will have no time to remember," and she smiled a little sadly.

"Will I not? and do you think I can forget? Now, by heaven, you do me wrong, Yolande! But give me some favor then that I may wear, and return in proof of my devotion."

"Will you wear this?" she asked, smiling, and detaching a silken scarf from her throat. But as she was about to give it to him, they were startled by three horsemen who had been concealed in a thicket, perhaps a hundred paces in front of them, and who now rode forward with threatening gestures. Yolande thrust the scarf into her bosom, while Guy, hastily begging her to remain quiet and fear nothing, placed himself before her. Fortunately, he had not abandoned his lance when he left his troop; and was completely armed; he felt no fear but yet he reproached himself for his imprudence in placing Yolande in danger. A swift glance showed him that he could expect

no aid, and that the assailants probably belonged to some roving band of free companions, who would have no respect for the rank or beauty of the young girl whom he had vowed to guard with his life.

"Now, Heaven be my speed," he thought, "here is a fair opportunity for a gallant *devoir*; would they but attack me one by one, but that they will never do. Ha! 'tis as I thought," he muttered, as the horsemen advanced as if to attack him at the same time. But if this was their intention they suddenly changed their minds, for two of them drew to the side of the road and passed the count, leaving their companion to oppose him. He spurred forward against this antagonist, who was unhorsed by the shock, and wheeling instantly, Guy saw the men who had passed him, seize each a rein of Yolande's horse and ride away. Plunging his spurs into the sides of the animal he rode he dashed off in pursuit, and as his horse was one of great power and speed, he gained rapidly upon the fugitives. Yolande remained perfectly calm, only turning her head now and then to glance back at Guy, who came nearer every moment. Seeing that escape was impossible the ruffians halted, and one of them placed himself in a posture of defence and sought to oppose the count, who bore down upon him with his still unbroken lance in rest. But the strength and skill with which Guy was endowed in no ordinary degree, and the force of his career, were not to be resisted; the fellow was borne from his saddle pierced through as though struck by a thunderbolt. Yolande was now struggling with the remaining brigand who had dismounted and endeavored to pull her from her horse. She made a brave resistance, and drawing her dagger struck her assailant such a blow in the arm as forced him to release her. At this instant Guy sprang to her side, sword

in hand, and would have struck the fellow to the ground, but he, falling on his knees, pleaded so piteously for his life, that the count had not the heart to put him to death, and depriving him of his weapon, which he broke with a stamp of his armed heel, he bade him begone. This he was not slow to do, and springing on his horse which was grazing by the road-side, he rode off at the top of his speed. Turning eagerly to Yolande, Guy asked whether she was hurt.

"No, my dear Count," she replied, giving him a look full of gratitude, not unmingled with admiration; "no, but how shall I thank you?"

"Do not thank me, Yolande. I have not deserved it."

"Oh! but you have!" she exclaimed, and drawing the scarf from her breast, "you must wear my favor; I will bind it on your helmet with my own hands, but not here," she added smiling, as she replaced it. "St. Mary! how strong and brave you are, Count Guy! If I had known before, I need not have trembled for you."

"And did you then?" asked Guy.

"Yes," she said, hesitatingly, "but another time I shall know better."

"I know," returned Guy, "that I trembled for you when I saw you hurried away. Can you forgive me, dear Yolande, for so thoughtlessly bringing you into danger?"

"Why, it is I who should ask forgiveness, for if I had not teased you to ride forward, we would not have been in any danger."

"But we should have missed our pleasant gallop after the heron," said Guy, smiling.

"And I should not have known how bravely my favor would be worn!"

“And I should have lost an opportunity of laying lance in rest for the fairest lady in France.”

Yolande blushed as she answered: “Perhaps we are both glad that we did an unwise thing. But, Count Guy, if we linger here, your men will be searching for us, and Bertrand will be wild with anxiety: then what if the fellow whom you allowed to escape, should come back with more companions?”

“Yes,” returned Guy, “’tis imprudent, let us hasten,” and pressing their horses, they rode rapidly forward. Guy did not forget to express his admiration of the courage shown by his companion, and this led him to ask whether she had lost her dagger. She replied by touching its hilt, and he inquired how she had learned to use such a weapon, smiling as he asked whether she was well accustomed to it. “For,” said he, “though the Italian ladies are well acquainted with the use of the poniard, it is an accomplishment not so familiar to our dames of France. I hope, my dear Yolande, that you have not often found it needful to resort to it. But, my faith, you struck with as true an aim, and as firm a hand, as I could have done myself! Truly, I am glad that the brigand received some slight punishment, though it is shame for me that you were obliged to defend yourself!”

“No, no,” cried Yolande, “I were no true de Coucy, if I could not strike a blow in my own defence; and, surely, you have no need to blame yourself, for how could you be in three places at the same time, unless you are a magician, Count Guy? But my father taught me how to hold and strike with the dagger, and I have often practised it, though not before on men,” she added, laughing.

They were now ascending the hill, and reaching its summit, turned to look at the stream, whose banks they had

just followed in rash pursuit of the heron, gleaming in the sunlight like a waving line of silver, as it wound its way through the rich meadow-land, and fell into the river Oise. Glancing in the opposite direction, they perceived a gently undulating country, covered for the most part by a heavy growth of forest, though here and there were cultivated fields in which the ripening grain waved heavily in the wind. At the foot of the hill ran the road along which the men-at-arms were advancing, and they evidently saw the count and his companion, for when they reached a point immediately beneath, they halted, as if waiting for them. Across the fields and rising above the surrounding forest, could be seen the great tower of the chateau which Yolande eagerly pointed out to Guy.

"So, yonder is our journey's end," said he. "I would it were not so near."

"But," replied Yolande, "I shall not allow you to return to Paris, Count, until you have proved the hospitality of Coucy. No, you must not think of leaving me until I have guided you through our castle, and you have seen the curious sculptures, and the carving and the pictures."

"I wish it might be, Yolande,—another time perhaps; now, I must not stay longer than to rest our horses. But why do you ever call me Count; 'tis far too distant, and you know my name: why do you never use it, dear Yolande?"

"But I do, my dear Count Guy de la Roche," and she smiled as she added: "You see I know it very well indeed. What, is that not right? Well, Guy, then—Ah! does that please you better?"

"A thousand times! but will you think of me as Guy, or dare I hope that you will ever think of me?"

"Yes, how should I not. The de Coucys do not forget: they are dear friends or bitter foes."

"Count me," exclaimed Guy, "count me among the first, yet not a dear friend, but the dearest!"

Yolande turned, and there was a soft light in the violet eyes, a truant color in her face—favorable omens which the young count marked with a rising hope. But he was not destined to receive the reply he looked so eagerly to hear; for, after gazing at her companion as though she would read his inmost thoughts, the wilful girl suddenly gave her horse the rein, and with a low laugh started down the hill, followed by Guy whose surprise was mingled with some fear lest he had offended her. However, there was something not altogether discouraging in the laughing glance thrown to him over the shoulder of the flying girl, and he resolved to await a time and place when his capricious beauty would not be able to make her escape so easily. They joined the waiting party, much to the relief of Bertrand who was alarmed at their long absence. Lanard observed that his master had returned without his lance, and suspected what had occurred, but asked no questions as the count resumed his place, and, giving the signal to advance, led the way rapidly toward the chateau.

The castle of Coucy was situated upon a hill, and presented an imposing sight from the town that nestled beneath, and rested safely within the shadow of those massive towers. In the centre rose the enormous donjon, a cylinder of stone, whose walls, twenty-five feet in thickness at the base, seemed able to resist all the assaults that time or man could make upon them. The donjon was flanked by four similar though smaller towers provided with heavy battlements. On one side the castle was protected by the sheer descent of the hill, which was

in that place a precipice of smooth and solid rock. The other sides were guarded by a deep fosse.

As Yolande rode over the drawbridge she glanced proudly up at the fortress, the home of her race: the blood of the de Coucys stirred within her, she was animated by the remembrance of the noble deeds of a long line of warlike ancestors, and as she called the count's attention to the figures of the two sires of Coucy that surmounted the gate of entry, her bearing was that of a true daughter of her house. The entire household was assembled in the hall, and great was the rejoicing at the return of their lady, whose proud spirit was tempered by such sweetness of disposition as to make her beloved by all.

Yolande directed the seneschal to show count Guy to an apartment in the western tower, and bade the latter make haste and join her at supper. "I will wager," she cried, laughingly, "that you will not doff your armor so quickly as I shall this riding habit of mine. So beware, my lord (Guy," she added in a lower tone, and with a mischievous glance at him) "that you do not keep me waiting!"

The supper passed off merrily, for Yolande was delighted to be at home again, and the count was charmed by the novel situation in which he found himself. He was still more pleased when his companion gayly proposed that they should make a tour of the castle, which he had some curiosity to explore. Preceded by several servants bearing lights and accompanied by Bertrand, they first made a circuit of the great hall. This immense room in which a regiment would have had space to manœuvre, was lighted by a number of windows in the vaulted roof, and heated by four huge fire-places. Two

of these chimneys were covered with beautiful decorations of flowers and fruits and trees wrought in stone. Between them the dais rose above the floor, and the recesses formed by the projection of the chimneys were ornamented with statues, and with carvings of rustic scenes. There might be seen the stag pursued by horse and hound, the falcon stooping on his quarry, animals and birds of various kinds: even the floor was covered with the tracery of a vintage scene; the vines loaded with fruit, peasants gathering the clusters of grapes and treading out the wine, all so clearly cut in the stone, as to need but the addition of color to make them appear alive and real.

The apartments of the first stage or floor, were supported by a circle of lance-shaped arcades sculptured with vines and trailing plants, and the succeeding floors were borne up in the same manner. The grand staircase began at the entrance of the hall, and winding about the walls, ended in a covered gallery which encircled the top of the donjon, and commanded a beautiful view of the surrounding country, and of the valleys of the Ailette and Oise. Far below were the towers placed at the angles of the central building, and beneath them lay the houses of the town. The battlements were amply provided with engines for assault or defence, and were manned by a strong force left by Yolande's father for the protection of the chateau. All this which would have been so clearly seen by daylight, was less distinct, though perhaps more pleasing, viewed by the fainter light of the moon which had just risen above the eastern horizon, as the count and his fair guide emerged upon the upper gallery of the tower. They lingered there a few moments, however, not ill pleased to watch the shadows wavering in the uncertain light, flinging themselves into a thousand fantastic

shapes that appeared and disappeared, as though summoned and banished by the wand of an enchanter—to observe the light that obliterated those phantoms, as the moon shone suddenly forth from the cloud that obscured it, and poured a silver flood over the earth: then slowly retracing their steps, they found themselves again in the great hall. Here Yolande declared that she should abandon her guest to Bertrand, who first conducted him to the room containing the figures of the nine *preux* chevaliers, sculptured in *bas-relief*. Guy expressed some surprise that of these famous warriors, France could boast of but two. Bertrand smiled as he answered that it was not an unfair proportion, for, said he, “Our country is but a little corner of the world where brave deeds have been performed.” He then pointed out a small cabinet, within which was a secret stairway that led to a vault, formerly used for concealing treasure, and from which there was a subterranean passage leading underneath and far beyond the walls.

They next descended a long flight of steps to the dungeons beneath the castle, but Guy was satisfied with a very brief inspection of those gloomy vaults, which seemed to his excited imagination to echo with the groans of the wretched beings who had once inhabited them. He proposed to return to the upper air, but Bertrand asked whether he would not first see the chamber in which one of the sires of Coucy had died, and pausing before a door covered thick with rust, he opened it and disclosed a narrow cell, darker and more dismal than the dreary corridor in which they stood. Guy drew nearer and peered into this recess hewn in the solid rock, but could distinguish nothing more than the vague outlines of a vaulted room, from which came a breath of chill air

that made him shiver. Taking a torch from one of the attendants, he held it within the opening, and saw that a little air and a feeble glimmer of light were admitted through a narrow aperture made in the rock. In one corner was a short column of stone, set deep into the floor : to this were attached an iron ring and the fragments of a chain, both nearly consumed by rust. He had scarcely time to obtain this brief glimpse, before the torch was extinguished by a puff of wind, and he was glad to follow Bertrand, who was already mounting the stairway leading to the chapel.

The ceiling of the chapel was covered with paintings, and among them were two which Guy examined with some interest, although the beauty of their execution could be but imperfectly seen by the light of the torches. One of these paintings represented the successful assault made upon the temple by the soldiers of Titus, and so vivid was the design that one could almost hear the shrieks of those who sought frantically to escape the sword of the legionaries. The other was the death of Roland, who, sinking to the ground, exhausted by wounds and deadly fatigue, still summoned up his failing strength, and with his last breath sounded the echoing note that, reaching the ear of the Emperor, warned him of the fatal loss he had sustained in the valley of Roncevalles. The busts placed in niches about the walls, the recumbent figures and the decorated altar were examined in turn, and Guy stood at last before the marble effigy of the first of the Coucys. He gazed for some moments at this stern figure mounted on his war horse, armed *cap-a-pie*, and bearing on his shield the haughty motto he had chosen as if in scornful defiance of the world.

“I am no king nor prince,
No duke, nor even count am I,
I am the Sire de Coucy !”

Finally Bertrand pointed out the slabs that marked the resting place of Raoul and Enguerrand de Coucy, and said, “It was Raoul, the elder of these, who died in yonder cell, and if you care to hear how his brother wickedly confined him there and contrived his death, I will relate the history; but if it please you, my lord, to return, and bid the Lady Yolande good night, I will go to my chamber and await you there, where you may listen more at your ease.”

He then left the count, who returned to the great hall, and was conducted by the seneschal to the dais where Yolande was seated, watching the people amusing themselves in the hall below. Placing himself by her side, Guy looked with much pleasure at the scene before him. Little groups gathered about a mountebank, whose parti-colored dress and ridiculous antics provoked shouts of laughter from those who surrounded him. A juggler was giving an exhibition of his sleight of hand; a fortune teller was revealing the future to those who would listen to him. Some were engaged in tossing a light ball back and forth by means of a long handled hoop, covered with an elastic substance. Men-at-arms in buff coats were seated by themselves casting dice, others were dancing with peasant girls. The entire household had assembled to celebrate the return of their lady, in the manner that pleased them best. Presently, a party of young girls entered. Over their gowns of black or blue stuff, they wore kirtles of scarlet, yellow, or crimson, open sufficiently to afford a glimpse of neck and bosom, and around their waists were loosely knotted sashes, either orange or violet in color.

Their hands were filled with flowers, and they approached the dais slowly, singing a measured song, and keeping time, as they advanced, with a waving movement that resembled the undulations of a wave. As they reached the upper end of the hall, each laid her tribute of flowers at Yolande's feet, and still continuing the rhythmic movement, passed on, and vanished at the foot of the grand staircase. When they had disappeared, Yolande turned with a smile to count Guy, and said, "Is not that a pretty welcome?"

"'Tis a fitting one at least," he answered, "for the queen of flowers bows herself at your feet, and acknowledges her fealty to the queen of beauty." Then, taking up a wreath of roses, he placed it in her hands.

Yolande plucked two or three of the flowers absently, and placed them in her belt. There was a moment's pause, which neither seemed to wish to break, until rising suddenly, Yolande exclaimed, "It grows late, my dear Count. Must you really return to Paris to-morrow?"

"I must set out before daybreak, for the marquis would never forgive me if I should linger here."

Yolande glanced at him, as she rejoined, "And what if I should not forgive you for deserting me so soon; think how lonesome I shall be, and perhaps—perhaps," she said, a little sadly, "I shall never see you again."

"Would you miss me then, dear Yolande? if I believed that—if I could know that you would welcome me again, what happiness! Tell me, Yolande, that you will not forget—that you will think of me sometimes, and that I may return; give me a flower that shall remind me of Coucy, and of you. No, not that," as she stooped to take one from the heap at her feet, "one you have worn."

Yolande looked down at the roses she had thrust in her

belt, and blushed a little as she selected one and gave it to him.

"I may not refuse," she said, "after all you have done for me. Return it to me when next you come to Coucy, and wear my favor boldly, Guy."

"I will defend it with my life, dear Yolande."

"But guard your life, for—for if you should lose it—"

"What then, Yolande?" demanded Guy, eagerly.

"Oh," said she, smiling, "the marquis de la Rivière would be sadly grieved, I know."

"And if that were all—if you cared not, I would throw it away to-morrow. Yolande," he exclaimed, passionately, "do you part with me thus? Say that you would grieve—say that you would weep, or by heaven! I will seek death, for while I live, I cannot forget you or cease to hope that you will love me!"

She listened with half averted face, but there was a suspicious moisture in the violet eyes, and her voice trembled a little as she answered:

"Oh, do not be rash, dear Guy. Guard your life well, and return soon to Coucy, for my sake."

He sprang forward to clasp her in his arms, but gliding away, Yolande reached the stairway, and turning with a little smile to Guy, who stood below, playfully shook her head at him and vanished, leaving Guy in a state of mingled disappointment and delight. But he no longer suffered the torments of uncertainty; he was at last assured of Yolande's love, and the future appeared to him illumined by a ros eate light. He felt but little inclination to listen to the story of Enguerrand de Coucy, which Bertrand had promised to relate to him, and the latter waited in vain for his coming; for Guy preferred the companionship of his own thoughts, and of the sanguine dreams that filled his mind.

CHAPTER XX.

PIERRE GILLES did not remember the kindness he had received at the hands of the good wine-merchant, during the years he had spent in his house. He forgot that he had been taken, a perishing outcast from the streets, and only called to mind the scorn with which he had been treated by Jeanne. His love for her, although it deserved not that gentle name, was inspired by admiration of the beauty of her person, mingled with a burning desire to humble her pride, and punish her for the ill-concealed contempt with which she regarded him. After revolving many plans for the accomplishment of his purpose, he at last decided on one which he resolved to execute before he set out for Meux, and taking with him two of his friends, the butchers, he stationed himself near the shop of his former master, who presently made his appearance at the door, and, attracted by the fires burning on the quay Pelletier, stepped out upon the street to obtain a better view. Pierre seized the opportunity to slip from his hiding-place, and glide noiselessly into the shop where he concealed himself. From his hiding-place he saw Maillart re-enter, and after going up the stairs, return almost immediately and leave the shop, fastening the door behind him.

"Ha, ha, master," muttered Pierre, "when you come back, you will miss what you would not lose for many a pipe of old wine," and rising softly, he undid the fastenings of a window and admitted his companions. They

mounted the stairs to the room above, where they found Mistress Mallart and Jeanne, who were naturally alarmed at seeing Pierre walk boldly in, followed by two men whose rude appearance was far from reassuring. Jeanne shrank back as Pierre approached her, and her mother throwing herself between them cried out.

"Stand you back, Pierre Gilles, and tell me what you want, and why you come here secretly and at night?"

"You will soon know what I want," he answered, roughly, "and as for how I came here, that you may find out for yourself, if you can. I know you are alone, and all your screams will not hinder me from carrying off yonder proud mistress, who hides behind you," and thrusting her aside, he motioned to his companions to hold her arms, while he seized Jeanne and dragged her toward the door. There, one of the fellows came to his assistance, for the active girl struggled hard to escape; and throwing a large scarf over her head, they hurried her away between them. They were quickly followed by their comrade, who, giving Mistress Maillart a violent push that threw her to the floor, hastened down the stairs, and joining his companions all made their escape by the open window, carrying Jeanne with them.

Maillart's daughter was no coward, but yet those of her sex who boast of fearlessness might have been alarmed at being so rudely borne away from home at such an hour, and by one whom they had every reason to dislike and fear. It is not strange then that as they threaded their way through the dark and crooked streets, her captors were obliged to walk slowly and at last to almost carry the trembling girl, whose feet refused to support her. At length they stopped and entered a house where they removed the scarf from Jeanne's face. To her sur-

prise and relief she found herself in the presence of the Provost Marcel, and as soon as she could collect her thoughts, she besought him to tell her wherefore she had been torn away from her father's house, and so harshly treated.

"But surely," she said, trying to smile, "you will protect me, Master Marcel, and send me back; for you and my father are dear friends, are you not?"

Marcel could not meet the trustful look she turned upon him, and avoided her eyes as he replied: "Yes, my pretty Jeanne, you will be safe here in my house, and shall soon return to your mother; but it is too late for you to go to-night, and my good wife shall see that you sleep as comfortably as in your own chamber."

"But my mother knows not where I am! She will die of anxiety; and my father, what will he say? I beg you, dear Master Marcel to let me go to them."

"Yes, yes child," said he kindly, "but I cannot send my servants with you, for they are busy to-night, and you cannot go alone; you must content yourself until to-morrow, unless you are willing to return with Pierre Gilles."

"Oh no," cried Jeanne shuddering, "not with him! Do send him away, good Master Marcel, for he frightens me. I am afraid," and she looked imploringly at him, and fearfully at Pierre who still lingered in the room.

"I will; he shall go at once, but do not be alarmed, my child, he shall not touch you."

"Oh, but see how he stares at me with his cunning green eyes—they make me shiver," whispered Jeanne; "pray drive him away, dear Master Marcel!"

The Provost went up to Pierre and said, "You had best join your fellows and see that they are in readiness to

march before daybreak ; by that time you should be on your way."

"And shall I find *her* here when I come back?" asked Pierre, with a sidelong glance at Jeanne "You looked kindly on her but now, master, and spoke to her as her father does ; though" he added with a grin, "you took good care that I should not hear what you said."

"Meddle not with what does not concern you," rejoined the Provost. "I do you a favor by keeping the girl in hiding while you are away."

"You will not let her escape, master?"

"No, my good fellow, but begone now, and look that you strike boldly ; let not the peasants put the butchers of Paris to shame!" So saying, he dismissed Pierre, but there was a contemptuous smile upon his lips, as he closed the door behind him.

Returning to Jeanne, he talked with her pleasantly until she had recovered from her fright, and then conducted her to his wife, whom he asked to provide for the comfort of their guest. When he re-entered the room where he had received Jeanne, he found that a new visitor had arrived ; this was no other than the baron de Roye, who, seated in the Provost's chair, nodded carelessly to him as he came in, and called out. "Ha ! Provost, yonder was a pretty maiden whom your fellows brought in as I passed your door a half an hour ago ! Can'st not give me a glimpse of her face, that I may judge of your good taste ? what have you done with her, man ? By Saint Peter ! I knew not that you merchants dealt in such wares ! Ha, ha, what says your wife to such bargains ?"

"My lord," said Marcel gravely, "it is true that I received a young maiden here, and that she was brought

hither by force, but it was to save her from being taken elsewhere by a wretch who longs to have her in his power; she is an innocent young girl and the daughter of one of my oldest friends."

The baron smiled sarcastically as he replied: "You refuse to let me see her then. I blame you not for that, but your tale is not very plausible, Master Provost."

"Do you not believe me? Well, see for yourself, and rising, Marcel opened the door into the next apartment, where his wife sat holding Jeanne's hand in hers, and talking pleasantly with her. The baron was somewhat abashed at this sight, and muttered an apology for his mistake; then looking keenly at the young girl, he said:

"I have seen a face like that somewhere. What is the maiden's name, Master Provost—Jeanne Maillart? *Peste!* it is not that! Who is this Maillart? is it not he who has turned all the merchants against you?"

"Yes, my lord," said Marcel, and he spoke bitterly.

"And yet you are willing to serve his daughter? Why I understand it not, for if her father has injured you, here is an opportunity to be revenged by abandoning the girl. Faith, why do you not take advantage of it?"

"Because" returned Marcel, "I am not yet so base as to revenge myself upon a helpless child; and perhaps," he added thoughtfully, "perhaps I am myself to blame that François and I are not friends as of old."

The baron laughed. "You grow womanish, Marcel; but do as you please, 'tis nought to me. Yet I wish I could remember whom that girl's face is like. Aha! I remember now. Yes," he went on, but speaking under his breath so that Marcel could not hear, "and this trinket gives the clew; beshrew me if I do not follow it for sport." After a few moments, during which he seemed to be ar-

ranging some plan that had occurred to him, he looked up. "Provost," said he, "my lord of Navarre bids me say to you that the time approaches, for his force is now strong enough to face the Regent. Will you keep your promise then, and deliver up the gates?"

"I have passed my word," answered Marcel, "and will keep it."

"Very well. Provost," said the baron abruptly, "these walls of yours are strong! Will they keep famine out?"

"What mean you, my lord? There is no fear of famine, unless the English come back."

"No," returned de Roye, "but yet the Dauphin holds the Marne and the upper Seine."

"The isle of France and Normandy furnish us with food, my lord."

The baron smiled and looked full in his companion's face. "True," said he, "but if Navarre should close the lower Seine you would be caught like rats in a trap, and it would not be the Dauphin who would send provisions to Paris, unless," he added slowly, "unless Paris sent him something in return."

"I understand you not;" but Marcel grew pale as he spoke, for a suspicion of his meaning dawned upon him.

The baron watched his face as though enjoying his perplexity, then laughed as he said: "I only mean to warn you that you must be true; that if Navarre should close the river and cut off the city's supplies from the north, you are lost, for the people would give you up to the Dauphin, and you know what you have to expect from him. Now, Master Provost, you understand the situation you are in, and will not refuse to do me a little favor."

"Certainly not, my lord, I shall be glad to serve you if I can."

"Very good; I am now going to join my lord of Navarre, and I ask you to allow yonder maiden to go with me."

"What!" exclaimed Marcel in astonishment; "Jeanne Maillart? But how can I do that? I have promised her to send her safely home, and she trusts me. Think what it is you ask, and then—and then—she is so young, so innocent, so helpless; it would be deadly sin, it is too much—I cannot!"

"Look you, Marcel," said the baron, "I am a hard man and pursue my aims though the devil himself stand in the way. I can look on a woman's tears and laugh; she may sob herself to death, and I regard it not, nor turn aside from my purpose to comfort her, but you are weaker, and I tell you that if you suffer yourself to be swayed by pity for every girl who comes to you with imploring looks, you will be ruined. Now I have a reason for wishing to take this Jeanne Maillart with me, but I will do her no harm, and you may send some woman with her if you will."

Marcel was greatly agitated; he knew the evil reputation of the baron, who made no attempt to conceal it, and he also knew that he would not hesitate to injure him with the king of Navarre, if he refused to give Jeanne up. An offence to the baron would doubtless be represented as an insult to his master, and might easily result in the destruction of all the Provost's hopes, and end in his utter ruin. Nevertheless he recoiled from the thought of placing the daughter of his old friend in the power of this unscrupulous man, and to avoid it was almost willing to bid him do his worst, and to abide the risk. But the baron

marked his cruel perplexity, and did not wish to drive him to extremity.

"Master Marcel," he said, "if you please me in this whim of mine, I give you the word of a belted knight not to injure the damsel, and to protect her in so far as I can. By St. Peter, I care for no merchant's daughters, and fly at higher game!"

"Yet will you be able to protect her?" asked Marcel, anxiously, "and how long will she be detained? I would willingly gratify you, my lord, in anything but this, and even in this, if you assure me that Jeanne will be treated with honor."

"She shall be," rejoined the baron.

"And," continued Marcel, "there is a faithful serving-woman here who could wait upon her. Will you take her with you, and not separate them?"

"Yes, yes, Provost; you have my word for all; no evil will happen to her, and she shall return in honor. Go now and prepare her; tell her she will be honorably treated. Do not hesitate, for she must and shall go with me, unless," he added, threateningly, "you would have Navarre for an enemy."

Marcel desired his wife to tell Jeanne that she was to go on a short journey with a nobleman, who would protect and treat her kindly, and though she wept and demanded to be told whither she was to be taken, she obtained no satisfaction, since neither Marcel or his wife could inform her of what they were ignorant of themselves. Mistress Marcel however furnished the poor girl with such articles of dress as were necessary to her comfort, and strictly charged the honest woman who was to accompany her not to leave her for a moment. She then folded Jeanne in her arms and kissing her tenderly

led her to the room where the baron was waiting. He received the weeping girl with some marks of respect, and bidding the woman lend her the support of her arm, left the house, when he was joined by five or six of his servants, who followed him as he led the way to the river, and embarked in a boat that lay waiting to receive him. Exhausted by fatigue and excitement, Jeanne sank half fainting on the cushions, leaning her head against the knee of Catherine, who soothed her as well as she could, gently smoothing her hair, and pressing her hand while she whispered to her not to fear.

Urged by four vigorous rowers, the boat went swiftly onward, gliding through the shadows cast by the towers of Notre Dame, past la Cité, and the islet of le Passeur, crossing the stream and following the left bank until the lights of the University grew faint behind, and disappeared in the haze that was creeping over the slope of St. Geneviève and onward still, past the sombre tower of Nesle that flung a sinister look upon the voyagers, who paid no heed to it as they hastened by, and stopped at last before a large house that stood close beside the river, and beyond the outskirts of the city. The baron who had remained perfectly silent since entering the boat, assisted Jeanne to disembark, and led the way up a flight of steps that rose from the water's edge. The two women followed with many misgivings, for the aspect of the house was forbidding enough, standing as it did quite alone, almost upon the brink of the river, and surrounded on three sides by a high stone wall. Two or three lights were shining from the windows of this isolated house, and the baron's summons was quickly answered by a lackey who ushered him into a large room, where he desired his companions to wait, and instantly

quitted them. Left alone, they sought to reassure each other, and Catherine, seizing a light and holding it above her head, made the circuit of the apartment, looking eagerly for some door or window by which it would be possible to escape. She was disappointed, however, for the only door was that by which they had entered, and the windows were placed so high as to make it folly to think of reaching them. The walls were bare, and the scanty furniture was so old as to prove that the room was seldom, if ever used. But their apprehensions were in some measure relieved by the appearance of a woman who now came in, and addressed Jeanne very respectfully, begging her to accompany her to another part of the house. As it would have been useless to hesitate, she complied with this request, and followed, clinging to Catherine's arm; but she glanced timidly at the corridors through which they passed, and started at the echoing sound of their feet upon the stair up which they went. It was with difficulty that she suppressed a scream, as they made their way along the winding passages where their own shadows, thrown upon the wall in grotesque and distorted shapes, seemed to mock and threaten them. It appeared an endless journey to the frightened girl, and her alarm increased as they came to a door, which, standing ajar, allowed a stream of light to cross the corridor, and from which came the sound of voices and of laughter. But hurrying on, their guide admitted them to a room better lighted and far more cheerful than any they had seen, and turning to Jeanne assured her that she would come early in the morning to render her any service in her power.

"You are in sad want of rest," she said, looking at her kindly. "Sleep quietly, and do not be alarmed: your

woman will be with you, and my lord directed me to see that you have all you need to make you comfortable, until you return to your home."

"Oh tell me when that will be!" exclaimed Jeanne, "and tell me why I am brought to this dreadful place."

"I cannot tell you, my dear mistress," said the woman pleasantly, "for I do not know; but sleep now, sleep without fear," and she left her to obtain the repose of which she stood so much in need.

But feverish with excitement, Jeanne Maillart tossed from side to side and started at every sound, until she fell at last into a fitful slumber, that was disturbed by dreams in which the repulsive face of Pierre Gilles and the frowning countenance of the baron de Roye appeared to her by turns.

Meanwhile the baron was seated in the room from whose half open door came the light, and the sound of voices that had startled Jeanne on her way to her chamber. He was not alone. His companion was a man of rather less than medium height, slender, but well proportioned; his dark olive complexion, black hair, and thin nervous face, his slender hands and sparkling eyes told of the hot blood of the South. It was Charles, king of Navarre—Charles le Mauvais, the cousin of the Dauphin, and he had ventured to approach the barriers of Paris to complete his intrigue with the Provost Marcel. The dispute in regard to his maternal inheritance of Champagne and Brie had embittered his life, and made him a dangerous enemy of his cousin, whose reign was destined to be continually disturbed by his plots and ambitious designs. Of a fiery temperament, he was daring in action, while he was at the same time calculating and perfectly unscrupulous. The spirit of intrigue ran in his blood, and he was

a master of the art of finesse. Gifted with a persuasive manner and possessing all the volubility of the South, having a consummate knowledge of human nature, and reading men's minds with the swiftness of intuition, he detected at a glance the weakness through which they might be influenced, and took advantage of it to attach them to his interests, or to involve them in the web of his designs—leaving them to extricate themselves as best they might when no longer of service to him.

He had seen in Etienne Marcel an instrument for the accomplishment of what he had in view, and the Provost of the merchants, who would otherwise have succeeded in doing much for the people, who would have lightened the burden that oppressed them, became a tool in the hands of the crafty noble. Sitting opposite to him, the baron de Roye was describing his visit to Marcel. Charles laughed heartily at the reluctance with which the latter had parted with Jeanne Maillart. "By my faith," said he, "the knave was right to be unwilling to place the dove within reach of the hawk! but you went too far when you gave your word that she should be sent back, for I know not that, Baron. She may be useful to us, and shall remain here until we know how she came by this. Dost think, de Roye, that this trinket really belongs to the girl?" and he pointed as he spoke, to a gold chain that lay on the table before him. To this chain was attached a heart shaped locket, bearing the single name Jeanne engraved upon it.

"Yes, your highness," answered the baron, "for I found it on the floor of the Provost's room, underneath a scarf that she wore."

"And which you returned to her, Baron?"

"Not I. I threw it on the table, and thrust the chain

beneath my cloak after I had glanced at the locket ; then when the Provost's wife came in bringing the maiden ready for her journey she exclaimed : ' Why, here is your scarf, Jeanne, but where is the chain, I fear it has been stolen, or you have lost it. ' ”

“ Ha ha ! ” laughed Charles “ she was not wrong. Stolen, quoth she ? I wonder if she suspected the thief ! Did'st have a hang-dog look, Baron ? ”

“ No, your highness, I looked on as bold as a stone image ; as innocent as a young lamb, while she searched on the floor, under the table, and in her husband's pockets, all the while making such an outcry as well-nigh deafened me. ”

“ Good faith ! did you not fear lest she should look under your cloak ? ”

The baron laughed. “ Truly she might have ventured so far, but by St. Peter ! I hurried away before she had time to search me. ”

“ And what said the girl herself ? ”

“ She was as silent as though she had been born dumb, and did naught but tremble. ”

“ Belike you scowled on her, Baron ; and when you frown your brow grows black enough. My word ! I wonder not that she shook with fear, and forgot her lost chain. I wager she thought you were the devil, and would fly away with her. ”

“ She is welcome to think what she pleases, and the devil may fly away with her, and her chain too, for what I care. The girl is pretty enough, but she has not the spirit of a mouse, and would faint at the sight of blood. By St. Peter, she is not worthy of a thought, and had I not vowed to unravel this mystery, I would not lift my finger to do her a service : she might trudge back to the wine

shop, and drown herself in a cask of Bordeaux, t'were all one to me ! ”

Charles threw himself back in his seat and laughed aloud. “Why, Baron,” said he, “you are sour as a flask of Rhenish, and all because a merchant’s daughter trembles to look in your face. But what need you care for that, man, if the fair Yolande of Coucy smile upon you ? There is your mate, de Roye. By all the saints ! there is a spirit that would not droop at the sight of blood, and a glance that would not fall before yours, frown you never so darkly ! Ha ! how speeds your suit ? hast coaxed the young falcon to your hand, my friend ? ”

The baron started up with an oath, then seating himself, he stamped his foot furiously on the floor as he replied : “She has baffled me, your highness.”

“What ! and you have been for weeks in Paris ! How have you missed so fair an opportunity ? ”

“How ? ’Tis because of that cursed old physician, who has thwarted my best laid plans. The insolent old knave barred the house against me, and kept watch and ward over his mistress as though she were some priceless jewel. May I seize his body, ere the foul fiend clutches his soul, for by St. Peter ! if I do, he shall suffer worse torments than the damned ! ”

An ironical smile curved the thin lips of the king as he said : “Fye, Baron, you should not be so violent, and rage thus against a feeble old man. But art thou not ashamed to be outwitted by this poor creature, who must now be in his dotage, for when I was a boy he was already bowed down by years. Bertrand, yes, Bertrand is his name, I remember him well.”

“But, your highness, I take no shame to myself to be outwitted by him, for he is in league with Satan. Yet

would I have foiled him but for the young count de la Roche, who came up as I was carrying the lady off. Curses on him, he shall dearly answer it !”

The baron relapsed into a gloomy silence, and gazed disconsolately at his companion, who exclaimed cheerfully : “ Come, come, do not be so downhearted ! ’tis an evil star that is ever obscured by clouds. Pluck up your spirit, de Roye, and do not despair, for if my plans succeed, St. Denys ! your star will be in the ascendant. I will stand your friend with the lady : she shall be yours in spite of Bertrand, or de la Roche, or the devil. But Baron, this young count Guy de la Roche promises well and is like to prove a dangerous rival, for he has a face such as women love to look upon. He is brave too or he were no true son of his father, and they say he is skilful enough with sword and lance. If you meet him you had best wear your strongest suit of Milan steel and look well to yourself.”

“ I fear him not,” muttered the baron. “ But what is your pleasure regarding Jeanne Maillart, what shall we do with her now that she is caged ?”

“ Let her remain here : she is safe enough, and will have time to recover from her fright before we return. Perhaps she will then be able to look in your face without trembling, ha, ha ! de Roye,” and Charles smiled maliciously as he spoke. But the baron paid no heed to the taunt, which indeed he did not care for, and the king continued.

“ Yes, she may stay here. You will give the woman strict orders to watch the girl, and see that she goes not beyond the garden. There is no danger of her escaping, for the walls are high, and this place is lonesome and has an evil name.”

"But will not your highness see the girl to-morrow?"

"No, Baron, it will be time enough after we finish with these scoundrel peasants: after we trample them under our charger's feet and crucify their leaders." A cruel smile crept over the king's face as he spoke and observing the baron's surprise, he added, "Though my cousin Charles and I are deadly enemies, I will assist him to crush the Jacquier. St. Denys!" he exclaimed proudly and with flashing eyes, "my cousin has done me bitter wrong, but 'tis not by the hands of peasant churls that I seek to revenge myself. No, no, de Roye, the eagle fights with his own kind, but he defends his rival's eyrie from the base vultures who would defile it. Ha, we will forward toward Meux, and if need be defend the ladies like spotless knights, though I trow we be none of the most immaculate, you and I."

The baron laughed as he answered: "Some few stains there may be on our shields if one looks keenly for them, but I am ever ready to put lance in rest for the honor of dames, and when we are in the neighborhood of Meux, we may see the fellow of this locket of Jeanne Maillart's for I know where it is, and have seen it."

"That is how you came to suspect^d that this contained a miniature I suppose," said Charles.

"Yes," rejoined the baron, "but I warrant that the winch-merchant never knew how to open it;" and touching a spring, the locket flew open, disclosing the portrait of a lady set round with brilliants.

"Who has the other," asked Charles, "and how came you to discover it?"

"'Tis a long story and would weary your highness, but," said de Roye, "the fellow of this locket is in the

hands of a woman who lives in the forest of Ermonne, and passes for a witch. Blanche, she is called, mad Blanche."

"We will see her," replied the king. "Perhaps she can explain what we seek to know. But the night wears away, Baron, and I begin to be drowsy. Come to me to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE peasant army was leaving its camp before the forest of Ermonne. Band after band moved away from the spot where they had been encamped, and marched away upon the high road leading to Meux.

Guillaume Callet stood upon a hill watching the departure of his followers, who, led by Jacques, were setting forward in disorderly fashion to besiege the town, whose plunder they were assured would enrich them all. The sun had set before the last straggling troop disappeared, and twilight was deepening into night as Callet turned away and skirting the edge of the forest for some distance left it behind him, and descended the slope leading to the river. He walked rapidly on, following the bank of the stream until he came to a dense thicket of alders that overhung the water. Pushing through this, dashing aside the branches with an impatient hand as he went, he found himself at the mouth of a cave or natural cavern in the rock, which there rose to a considerable height, and jutting into the river, formed a little promontory whose summit commanded a view of the course of the Marne for miles. A faint light came from the interior of the cavern, which Callet entered after a moment's hesitation. As he advanced, the light became more distinct, and was seen to proceed from a fire burning on the rocky floor. Beside the fire was the crouching figure of a woman who started up as Callet approached, waving her arms as though to repel an unwelcome visitor: but paying no

heed to her inhospitable gestures, he advanced until he stood before the singular being who inhabited that secluded spot. Her figure was tall and gaunt, and her face, embrowned by exposure to sun and wind, seemed more emaciated than it really was because of the prominence of her high cheek bones, over which the skin was drawn like a shrivelled parchment; her aquiline nose was thin and sharp, standing like a sentinel over a mouth which was rendered almost horrible by two enormous front teeth, which, curving downward, resembled the tusks of a wild animal. Her hair, once coal black, was thickly streaked with grey and hung neglected about her shoulders; her eyes were small but bright and piercing, and burned with an unnatural fire that betrayed the madness lurking there. She was dressed in a faded blue gown that fell but little below her knees, a ragged scarlet mantle covered her shoulders, and a red cloth, passed over her head, was fastened beneath her chin by an ornament that contrasted strangely enough with the rest of her attire: it was a heart-shaped locket, apparently of gold, that served her for a brooch, and seemed singularly out of place on the withered throat of this eccentric creature, who raised her voice to a shrill scream as she addressed Guillaume Callet.

“What brings you hither, dark browed peasant? What brings you to the dwelling of mad Blanche, who would fain be alone, alone, alone? Begone, and leave me in peace, before you hear that which you care not to learn, and before I look upon you with the evil eye! What!” she cried with a wild laugh. “Will you not go? Well, stay then, fool!” and kneeling down she held her skinny hands over the coals, drawing the tattered mantle more closely about her, while she fixed her burn-

ing eyes on Callet who stood silent, and as if uncertain how to reply. At last he spoke. "Why do you live alone, mother," he asked, "here in this hole, when not a peasant on the borders of the Marne but would gladly help to give you shelter, and see that you do not lack food and fire?"

Blanche laughed mockingly as she answered: "And why would they give me shelter and food and fire? Is it because they love me; or because they fear lest I look upon their children and they die unbaptized; lest their cattle droop, lest their harvests wither with the blight? Oho! what cares Blanche for such love, what for gifts they dare not withhold if she stretches out her hand for them! Seek not to deceive me with foolish words, thinking I believe that you come to offer me food and shelter. Tell me then, Guillaume Callet, think not to hide the truth from me," and she pointed her long finger threateningly at the peasant, who, bold as he was, trembled before her and looked down, unable to meet the searching gaze fixed upon him.

"Do not be angry, mother," he said, "I know it was overbold in me to come here to-night, but I have something to ask you, and they say you can answer all manner of hard questions; that you know what will happen to-morrow, and—afterward; that you see what is hidden from others, and I would fain know whether—"

"What need to tell me, do I not know the question that trembles on your tongue? Aha! and why must you know to-night, whether you will succeed in your attack on yonder town; will you not know soon enough, will you not know to-morrow, fool?"

"But hide it not from me, mother. See, here is gold for you."

Blanche sprang to her feet and struck the proffered coin from his outstretched hand. "Gold," she said, "what is gold to me! Ah!" she screamed, "it was the cursed glitter of the gold that robbed me of my child, my pretty child. Out of my sight, Guillaume Callet! for you remind me— But see, but see, where the foul fiend comes holding out hands filled with yellow gold, tempting Blanche again. Hist! black browed peasant, dost thou see Satan yonder? but I fear him not, not I!" and her wild laugh rang through the cavern, as she grasped her companion by the arm, and pointed to a dark corner where the fire light flickered on the wall. "Dost not see him?" she screamed, again staring into his face.

"No, mother," answered Callet. "I see naught but the wall of rock and the shadows on it."

"Out on thee for a blind fool!" she cried, pushing him so violently away from her that he almost fell. "He sees naught, he sees naught besides the wall, ha, ha, but Blanche can see; Oho!" and she stood with eyes fixed and staring straight before her, while she swayed her body from side to side crooning to herself, and seeming unconscious of the presence of Callet, who, awed by her incoherent words and strange manner, feared to disturb her. He stood for some moments watching her silently, and as if fascinated; for in common with all the peasants of the district, he firmly believed her to be gifted with supernatural powers.

At length he roused himself. "Mother," he said, "I must go; tell me then if I shall succeed to-morrow."

"Who speaks to me?" cried Blanche, starting like one suddenly awakened. "Who asks of to-morrow? Ah! 'tis the black browed peasant. Why will you not be gone?" she asked, turning her eyes upon him. "Go, go

Guillaume Callet ; to-morrow will bring what you dream not of ! ”

“ But I will know,” and he seized her roughly by the wrist. “ By the devil, I will force you to speak ! ”

“ Force me ! ” shrieked Blanche, disengaging her wrist from his gripe with a strength it seemed impossible she should possess. “ He will force me to speak, this black peasant, this slave, this dog who murders women and children ! Ha, ha ! ” and her shrill laugh echoed through the cavern, peal after peal. Callet, furious at being thus mocked, was about to rush upon the woman, who stood drawn up to her full height, her eyes glaring, her hair streaming over her shoulders, her mouth flecked with foam, distorted by its hideous teeth, and by the demoniac laughter that issued from it. But he quailed before the fierce glance that met his ; all his superstitious dread returned as he gazed upon this fury, whose bare arms were extended with a menacing gesture, and whose appearance was rendered more frightful by the lurid glow of the fire light in which she stood.

“ Back,” she cried, “ back ’ere I wither your arm in its socket ! Oho ! do you tremble now, you who would compel me to speak ? ”

In truth Callet had shrunk backward, cowed by the threat which he did not doubt that she was able to execute.

“ Spare me, mother,” he said humbly, “ do not curse me, for I meant no harm and will trouble you no more. Yes, mother, I will go if you wish to be alone ; ” and he retreated toward the mouth of the cave.

But Blanche, whose anger was fully aroused, did not suffer him to escape so easily. “ Stop ! ” she screamed. “ You would not go when I bade you, and now you shall stay.

Aha ! you shall listen while I tell you of what I saw this day. I saw a raven fly down from a tree, and pounce on a little wood dove whose wing was broken so that it could not escape ; and the raven carried the helpless dove up to his perch, and there he sat croaking and flapping his ugly wings ; so he gloated over his prey, and forgot the great eagle that lived far above on the crag. But the eagle's eye was on him, and there came a rush of wings as he swooped downward, and struck the silly raven with his sharp talons. Oho ! Guillaume Callet, how like you the fate of the raven ? ”

“ What does it matter to me, mother ? The raven is a foul bird.”

“ Listen to the fool ! ” cried Blanche. “ What does it matter to him ? Ha, ha ! he asks what does it matter to him, and yet he is not mad ! Oh, what a dullard not to be mad, so he might understand. Harken then, gloomy browed peasant. Your hands are red with the blood of the helpless and the innocent : your soul is blacker than the raven's wing, and night is not darker than the passions that rage within you. Yonder lies the fair city, and within are the beautiful, the dainty ones, the weak : within are sparkling jewels and the cursed gold. The fiend whispers in your ears : ‘ all are yours.’ But beware, for the eagle's eye is upon you, his talons are sharp, and his wings are strong. Beware the swoop of the eagle, foul raven ! Aha ! I see a cloud of wings, and hear the hoarse scream of the birds of prey as they hover over the slain. Oho ! peasant, I see your fellows there pierced with the lance, cleft with the sword, trampled by the iron feet of the horses, all, all, but no, where is the black browed one ? where is he ? Ah ” she muttered to herself, passing her hand across her eyes, “ this mist hides him from me : how

it floats like a black cloud before my eyes. Oho! it is gone, and I see again. Ha, ha! I see him now! yes, yes, but what is that upon his head, a crown of thorns? Aha, 'tis an iron crown heated red hot! Hark, how he screams, see how he writhes as the sharp points pierce his brain: ha, ha, 'tis a brave coronet! Oho! Guillaume Callet," she cried, turning her gaze suddenly upon him, "you would fain hear of to-morrow, how like you the fair day?"

Callet had stood as if stupefied, listening to the wild words whose meaning gradually dawned upon his mind. He was filled with rage and terror, and remained a moment with downcast looks and scowling brow; but when he made a step forward his knees shook under him, and without answering the mocking question addressed to him, he turned about, and with a muttered curse rushed hurriedly away, pursued by the shrill laughter of Blanche, and with her words ringing in his ears.

While he hastened forward to overtake the peasants led by Jacques, a boat was slowly crossing the Marne, directing its course toward the headland underneath which was the cavern inhabited by Blanche. As this boat reached the land, four men disembarked and passed quickly up the ravine, until they reached the spot from which the peasant had shortly before fled in dismay. Halting there a moment, two of the party stationed themselves at the mouth of the cavern, while the others entered, and guided by the light from within soon stood before Blanche, who seated on a rude stool, her arms folded and her head sunk upon her breast, appeared to be asleep. Her visitors were in no haste to disturb the sleeper: they whispered together, and looked curiously about them, until the silence was broken by the smooth

clear voice of Charles, king of Navarre, as he addressed his companion. "By my word," said he, "you have brought me to a witches' den, de Roye! Is yonder hag she of whom you told me?"

"She is, your highness, and see, upon her neck the fellow of Jeanne Maillart's locket: shall I seize it before she awakes, or shall I prick her with my dagger to teach her better manners than to sleep in your presence?"

"No, Baron, we had best use her gently or she may refuse to tell us how she came by such an ornament, and, my word! we have no time to spend in coaxing a woman to speak against her will! So place your hand on her shoulder, but beware lest she bite through your gauntlet with those long tusks of hers! Soho! shake her not so rudely—gently, de Roye, or we shall have trouble ere we learn the secret."

His caution came too late, however, for the baron, laying his heavy hand upon the old woman, shouted in her ear: "Awake, Blanche, awake then thou hag of Satan!" Thus rudely aroused, she opened her eyes and stared full in the face of de Roye with so wild a look that he involuntarily retreated a step: she then folded her arms and resumed her former attitude. The baron was about to repeat his effort to rouse her, but the king signed to him to stand aside, and going up to Blanche spoke to her in a gentle voice. "Good mother," he said, "open your eyes and listen to me: tell me where you found the pretty jewel you wear upon your neck—how came you by it, mother?" Her eyes opened suddenly, and she grasped the locket tightly in her hand.

"No, no," she said as if talking to herself, "they shall not take it from me, 'tis all I have left to remind me of

my child. Ah, would you rob poor Blanche?" she exclaimed wildly.

"No, good mother," replied the king with a pleasant smile. "You shall keep the pretty plaything to remind you of your child, only let me see it."

"And why would you see it? No, you shall not see it!"

"But, mother, if you will not let me look at it, tell me at least who gave it you."

"I will not tell, unless you swear not to take it away; will you swear?"

"Yes, mother, upon the cross."

"No, not that" cried Blanche, "swear by the spirits of the river and the fountain; swear by the sun and rain; by the blood that warms your body; by the poison that chills the veins, and turns the heart to ice."

"'Tis a formidable oath," said the king under his breath, "but, *peste!* what matter, she is mad. Well, mother," he said aloud, "I swear by all of these."

"Then I will speak, for you have a kind voice and you smile on me. Yes, Blanche will tell you all," and she fixed her eyes upon his face, speaking in an uncertain and broken voice though her words were wild.

"There was a noble knight who took away my daughter, my darling child, and she came back to me and died. She was all I had to love and he stole her away, the wicked knight, but I had my revenge. Yes, Blanche had her revenge. Are you the robber who killed my child? But no, he is dead, and she, the beautiful lady here (and she pointed to the locket on her neck), she is dead, and their child—oho! Blanche stole her away to be revenged, and perhaps she is dead too. Now will you

go away, and leave the jewel that reminds me of my child ? ”

“ Yes, mother,” said the king, “ but tell me first the name of the wicked knight, or have you forgotten ? ”

“ Forgotten ! no, no, but do not let him hear, that bad man yonder,” and she pointed to de Roye. “ Hark ! ” she said, coming close to the king, and whispering in his ear. Charles started in surprise and was silent for a moment, then smiling kindly he said, “ You have had a fine revenge, mother, for the beautiful lady who made her husband forget your daughter, died of grief at the loss of her child.”

“ Yes, yes ! ” and she laughed as she spoke, “ Blanche knew how to wring her heart ! but,” she added, shaking her head, “ she did not suffer enough, for she died.”

“ And what became of the little child she wept for ? ” asked the king.

Soothed by the gentleness with which he treated her, Blanche’s manner lost much of its wildness as she answered, “ Ah ! I might have made it suffer too, but the little child was not to blame, and I gave it to one who promised to take care of it. Perhaps it still lives and is happy. I am glad I saved her life. If she knew, perhaps she would say a prayer for poor Blanche’s soul. Now I have told you all.”

“ Thank you, good mother, but before I go, will you let me see the picture of the beautiful lady ? ”

She looked at him half distrustfully ; but none knew better than Charles of Navarre how to assume a frank and pleasing manner, and his smiling face banished all suspicion from the mind of Blanche, who removed the locket and, touching the spring, held it open in her hand.

Charles leaned forward and examined it carefully, then

rose and whispered to de Roye, "You were right, and yonder is a copy of the trinket that you found. The portrait and arms are the same, and the old woman's story is proof enough, though if more is needed, it will be easy to procure. But look you, Baron, we must have the miniature, and perhaps it would be well enough—yes, we will secure the old woman!"

"How can we take her now?" asked de Roye, "What can we do with her?"

"We will find a place to hold her, until we have leisure to follow up this mystery," returned the king. "Wait, Baron, I will get the locket, and as soon as I have it, do you call in our men and let them seize the hag:" then approaching Blanche he said gently, "Mother, let me look once more at the pretty lady's face."

But she shook her head, "No, no," she muttered, and yet she went on looking keenly at him. "He has sworn by life and death, he dares not deceive me. Here then," she said aloud, and opening her hand as she spoke, "look once more if you will."

"Thank you, good mother," rejoined the king with a sarcastic smile as he received the locket, which he instantly thrust in his breast, signing at the same time to the baron to summon the men stationed without. Blanche leaped to her feet and darted a furious look at the king, who bore it unmoved, and with a smile still upon his lips.

"Seize this woman!" he said to the men who ran up in obedience to the baron's signal. They were about to lay hold of her, when Blanche, screaming out, "Your oath! remember your oath!" suddenly disappeared, nor could they discover how or where she made her escape, or find the least sign of any hidden passage-way, although they searched in every corner of the cavern.

CHAPTER XXII.

It was the *fête* day of St. Celine, but instead of festivity, terror and confusion reigned in Meux, for the treacherous mayor had betrayed the gates to the peasants who were instantly joined by a great number of citizens who sympathized with them in their hatred of the nobles.

According to his agreement with Soulas, Pierre Gilles and his companions had been admitted to the city before the peasants, and they lay concealed, waiting for the moment when they could issue from their hiding-place and begin their work of pillage. Soulas had shrewdly selected the day and hour. He knew that the Dauphiness had given a great entertainment the night before, and he thought he would take the nobles by surprise. But he had not counted on the vigilance of the marquis de la Rivière, who, apprised of what was going forward (though too late to prevent the peasants from entering), was yet in time to rouse the Dauphiness and her ladies, and to send them to the great market which was well fortified, and difficult to approach since it was nearly surrounded by the Marne, which flowed in the form of a loop about it. This place the marquis prepared to defend and had no doubt of being able to do so successfully; but he was astonished at the assurance of Callet, and enraged at the disloyal citizens, who, casting away their allegiance, would have allowed the wife of the Dauphin and a crowd of the noblest dames in France, to fall into the hands of the ferocious peasants. He lost no time, however, in drawing

up his force to oppose their attack, marshalling his knights and men-at-arms in firm array, riding from rank to rank reminding them that they were about to defend the honor of the Dauphin, as well as their own, and urging them to seize the opportunity, thrust upon them, of crushing the Jacquerie at a blow. Meanwhile the peasants were advancing through the town uttering loud shouts. Having obtained so easy an entrance to the city, and meeting with no opposition from the citizens who either joined them or concealed themselves, they thought the battle already won, and murmured loudly against their leaders who urged them onward toward the market place. They were eager to begin the work of pillage, and unwillingly followed Callet who told them that they must first defeat the little band of knights before them.

"Ho, ho!" they shouted, "if we must fight before we eat, let us kill yonder cowards who hide their faces under steel caps! Be they the proud seigneurs who trample on us? Ho, ho! we will swallow them at a mouthful!" and they rushed forward in a disorderly mass, singing and cursing as they went.

It was a frightful moment for the noble dames, who saw the slender force of their defenders about to be assailed by an army, a furious raging army, intoxicated with success, and filling the air with hideous threats. It was a perilous moment for France, and well it was that so resolute and skilful a knight as the marquis de la Rivière commanded the gentlemen who were to oppose the destructive tide that swept upon, and threatened to overwhelm them.

The peasants advanced until, reaching the plain in front of the market, they halted, and their leaders attempted to form them into more orderly companies, as each strag-

gling band emerged from the streets through which they had marched in wild disorder. It was this moment that the marquis chose, and placing himself at the head of his knights, he gave the signal to charge. "Forward," he cried, "God and St. Denys to aid! Follow me." He was answered by loud shouts of "Montjoye! St. Denys! on, on!" as setting spurs to their horses, the knights rode at full speed upon the peasants, piercing their confused ranks as the sharp prow of a ship cleaves and dashes aside the waves. The onset of this compact body of steel clad horsemen was irresistible; the ill armed peasants went down before it like ripe grain before the scythe of the reaper: a broad swath of corpses marked the course of the riders, who charged again and again, until involved in the mass of their enemies, they were no longer able to preserve their close order, and fought singly, each man hewing his way through the crowd that surged about him. The peasants, unable to make any impression on the armor of proof that defended their opponents, threw themselves upon the ground and crawling underneath the horses, stabbed them with their long knives, or surrounding the rider sought to pull him down, when, unable to get upon his feet because of his heavy armor he was despatched by blows of their axes. The marquis perceived the danger of allowing the battle to become a series of personal encounters, in which each horseman would be thus surrounded by a score of assailants, and he endeavored to rally his scattered force. Planting his banner on a rising ground, he took his station there with a few knights and some fifty men-at-arms, commanding them to stand firm and to afford succor only to those who were in danger of being overborne by numbers.

In the mean time, Gillaume Callet and Jacques, both armed with huge axes, fought on foot. These men of gigantic size and ferocious aspect, rushed from place to place waving their bloody axes, encouraging their comrades, urging them to maintain the contest, and appearing to be indifferent to death, so recklessly did they expose their lives ; and had Pierre Gilles led the butchers to their aid, the combat would probably have been decided in their favor. But the plunder of the town was a temptation not to be resisted by the mob from Paris, which was busily engaged in breaking into the houses, robbing at will, and murdering all who resisted them. The issue of the battle was doubtful, when a knight spurred up to the spot where the marquis sat sternly watching the fight, marking those who were hard pressed and sending them aid, while he restrained the eagerness of those who would have dashed blindly into the *mêlée*. "Where is the marquis de la Rivière," shouted the rider, as he urged his horse forward "I bring you word of succor at hand, noble Marquis," he exclaimed, as de la Rivière rode up to his side.

"Ha ! 'tis in good time, Sir Knight," replied the marquis, "for, by heaven, we are hard beset ! Who comes to our aid ?"

"The noble count de Foix and the Captal of Buch follow me close, and yonder you may see the gleam of their spears," returned the knight, pointing to a cloud of dust that rose in the distance, and through which could be seen the flash of lances.

"Back, back," cried the marquis, "and say to the count de Foix that my banner still waves : bid him follow the river bank and charge the peasants in the rear. Ha ! your horse is spent, take mine," and flinging himself to the ground, he gave his rein to the messenger.

"Away, Sir Knight, bear my message to the count and linger not. Spur! spur!"

The flashing of armor could soon be seen, and the tramp of horses came every moment more distinctly to the ear. Presently a large body of knights and men-at-arms swept full in view, and a grim smile overspread the face of the marquis, as he caught sight of the banners of de Foix and the Captal, and marked the skill with which the horsemen wheeled to the left without decreasing their speed, then halted suddenly a bow-shot from the enemy. As soon as their horses had recovered breath, the entire troop dashed forward and fell upon the rear of the peasant army, while at the same moment, the marquis at the head of the small force he held in reserve, charged down the slope and threw himself into the thickest of the affray. The air was filled with shouts of, "Buch, Buch! de Foix to the rescue!" answered by the trumpets of the marquis, and cries of, "Montjoye! St. Denys! France, France!"

The peasants, wavering before, were thrown into confusion by this fresh attack. They had fought stubbornly, but they offered no further resistance. Seized by an ungovernable panic they turned their backs and fled, despite the efforts of Callet and of Jacques, who, surrounded by the boldest of their fellows, still held their ground. But as Callet saw his army broken, and the battle lost, the ground heaped with the corpses of his followers, and himself almost deserted, he remembered the words of Blanche, and his face grew pale. "It was true then," he muttered, "I am lost."

"What are you saying?" demanded Jacques who stood by his side, his head bare, his armor broken, his face bleeding from a wound that had laid open his cheek;

but still wielding the huge axe that seemed but a feather in his hand. "What are you saying to yourself, and why are you so pale? Ho! are you afraid because the cowards leave us?"

"No, Jacques, but it was true; it was true,—the raven and the eagle, yes, yes, we are lost, I tell you!"

"Lost!" shouted Jacques with a savage laugh, "not while we can swing our axes. Ho, Guillaume, let yon cowards come within reach of our arms if they dare! See how they draw back; by the devil, the proud seigneurs are afraid!"

Callet made no reply, but looked about him with a gloomy brow, for the peasants were flying in all directions pursued by the men-at-arms, and it was no longer a battle, but a slaughter: only a few men as reckless as themselves stood by the two leaders of the defeated army, and he knew that it was hopeless to continue the struggle. While Callet hesitated whether to make his escape, or to throw away his life, the marquis de la Rivière ordered a body of men-at-arms to charge the band that still held its ground.

"Yonder," he said, "must be Guillaume Callet himself! A hundred crowns of gold to him who slays or captures him!"

The peasants saw the advancing spears and braced themselves to meet the onset, but they were overborne by the rush. Jacques fell to the ground, thrust through by a lance; his comrades were struck down and trampled beneath the horses' feet, and the battle was over. Thousands of the unfortunate peasants lay dead upon the field, and but few of those who fled escaped the relentless hands of their pursuers. Among these, however, was Guillaume Callet, who, avoiding the thrust of the spear aimed at his

breast, seized the rein of a horse in his powerful grasp, and striking the rider to the ground, leaped into the saddle and galloped away.

Meux was severely punished for the treachery of its mayor. Having been threatened by the peasants and robbed by the butchers, the hapless citizens were now compelled to see their houses set on fire by the angry nobles, who were willing to destroy this town, which instead of affording them a refuge, had so nearly proved fatal to them. Men-at-arms rode through the streets casting lighted brands into the dwellings, and cutting down all whom they met with arms in their hands. Women and children rushed from their burning homes wringing their hands, and calling for aid upon their patron saints, only to be trampled down by the riders, who heeded not the shrieks of those who were crushed beneath their chargers' feet.

While the battle was raging before the great market, the butchers had gorged themselves with plunder, and many of them were slain as they attempted to escape laden with their booty. Pierre Gilles also had gathered a rich harvest, for Antoine Soulas had guided him; and while the fate of Callet's army was still undecided, the two wretches had returned to the mayor's house to divide the spoil. As they entered the room where Soulas concealed his wealth, each carried a heavy bag which he placed upon the floor. This room had but one door which was strongly barred, and secured by a large bolt as well as by a strong lock. A window opening into a court admitted light, but as it was covered with thick iron bars, the only way of entering the mayor's apartment was by the door, to which he turned after putting down his burden. Having drawn the bolt he attempted to put

the key in the lock, but his hand trembled with excitement, and he said to his companion.

"Here, friend Pierre, do you lock the door for my hand shakes as though I had the palsy; turn the key, good youth, and place it on the shelf."

Pierre turned the key and pretended to put it on the shelf; but instead of doing so, thrust it into his pocket unobserved by the mayor, who on his knees beside the bags, was trying to undo their fastenings. Pierre followed his example, and the contents of the sacks were soon spread upon the floor. There was more wealth than Pierre had ever looked upon, and Soulas turned to him, his eyes sparkling with greed as he pointed to the heap of plate and coined money before him.

"Ha, ha, good youth," and he rubbed his hands together as he spoke, "did I not say I would show you how to gain more in one day than you would in a lifetime of drudgery? Ho, ho," and he sprang to his feet, leaping in the air, clapping his hands and laughing with delight. "What are you thinking of?" he went on, observing that his companion was silent and did not reply.

"I am thinking how we shall escape," replied Pierre, "where we can hide all this, and conceal ourselves until we can make our way to Paris; for I suppose you will not stay here, Master Mayor?"

"No, no," said Soulas, "I will go with you to Paris, and then across the sea; but first let us divide the treasure, and then we will find a place in which to hide it, and ourselves too. Give yourself no concern about that, good youth, for I know a safe place, and we will hasten thither. Ho, ho! give yourself no concern, I say: I am too old to be caught, and provided a sure hiding-place long ago."

"I am glad of that, master, and you think none can find it?" asked Pierre.

"I defy the devil himself to find us when we are once there. So let us to work," and Soulas began to separate the heaps into two parts. This was a task attended with some difficulty, for the articles were of various kinds, and both were ignorant of their exact value; but after some wrangling, they agreed upon the share each was to receive, though Pierre grumbled and declared that Soulas had retained the most valuable portion for himself.

"But you should not say that I have deceived you," said the mayor, in reply to his objections; "and even though I have a gold piece or two the more, you should not grudge them, when, but for me you would have none at all."

"And how do I know," answered Pierre, suspiciously, "that you will keep your promise, and find a safe hiding-place? You have cheated me, and now perhaps you mean to betray me: devil take me, if I am not tempted to strangle you, for I have a mind to shift for myself. What are you grinning at, you old robber? Would you dare play me such a trick, then? You had best not, unless you want me to wring your neck," he added, with a threatening scowl.

"What wild words are these?" returned Soulas. "Betray you, good youth! Why, we are good friends; come, let us have no hard words, and all for the matter of a golden crown or so: surely you would not hurt a poor old man who has only done you good. Surely not, for you are a good youth, a wise youth! See, Master Pierre, I will be generous, and if you think you have not a fair share, I will give you this costly cup," and he took from

his bag a silver chalice that they had stolen from the Abbey church.

"'Tis little enough," said Pierre, ungraciously, thrusting it into his bag, "'tis little enough, and you shall give me more than that, before I quit you! Now let us leave this place and conceal ourselves."

"Yes, yes," said the mayor, "we will go, but," laying his hand on his companion's arm, and speaking in his softest tones, "distrust me not, Master Pierre. Oh, no, distrust me not, for we will be good friends, dear friends, and help each other."

"Are you coming?" demanded Pierre, roughly.

"Yes, good youth, yes, but I must first fetch my cloak, for the nights are damp and we shall be out late, perhaps; and then, I am not so warm of blood as you. Ah! 'tis a fine thing to be young, and to have life before you—yes, and to have gold to help you enjoy it. Ho, ho! Pierre, you are a lucky youth. Oh, what fortune for one so young! while I—think how many years I have toiled and waited: and now I am old, yes, old and feeble, so that I shiver in the night air"

"Will you never be done talking?" growled Pierre, "hold your tongue, and make haste."

"I am going," returned Soulas. "O yes, I will make haste, but look you out of the window, for I heard a noise in the court just now, and we must not be seen."

He then crossed the room, and took down a cloak that hung upon the wall, and if one had observed him closely, he would have seen him feel for something hidden in the folds of the garment, before again crossing the room, which he did with a swift and noiseless step. Pierre stood at the window staring into the little court, and did not hear the stealthy tread of the mayor, or see

the malignant look upon his face, as standing close behind him, he withdrew his hand from the cloak. For an instant he stood motionless, crouching like an animal about to spring, then, raising his arm suddenly, he plunged a dagger into Pierre's neck with all his strength, and flinging himself upon the body as it fell heavily to the floor, he struck the dagger again and again into the neck and throat of his victim.

"Ha, ha!" he screamed, "I am an old robber, forsooth, and you would strangle me. Ho! I need not fear the gripe of your fingers on my throat now. Aha! good youth. Ho, ho! wise youth, you thought to outwit Antoine Soulas; you thought to strangle him and take all! why do you not take it then? why do you not rob the feeble old man? Ha, ha!" and he laughed horribly, as he kneeled on the prostrate form, his small green eyes, repulsive mouth, and yellow teeth reminding one of a hyena about to devour his prey.

He remained in this position for some time, uttering now and then a snarl of rage as he stared into the dead face, struck it with his clenched hand, or grasping the hair, beat the head savagely against the floor; then rising to his feet, he began to drag the body along until he reached the opposite corner of the room, where he stopped and began to speak. "Listen, good youth," he said, "listen, Pierre Gilles, for we are dear friends and must help each other. You would fain have trusted to yourself alone, wise youth, but you dared not, for you would have been found, and so you trusted me: ho, ho! that was well, because I knew of a safe hiding-place where you could lie concealed. Did I not say no one could find you there? and you believed me not; but you shall see that I spoke the truth, and you will be quite safe in the hiding-place I

made for you. Oh, yes, you will be quite safe there ! Ho, ho ! go, then !” and lifting a trap-door, he pushed the body through the opening with his foot. The sound of a heavy object plunging into water was heard as Soulas replaced the door, and looked about him with a glance of triumph. As his eye fell upon the bags which still remained near the window, he laughed. “Aha !” he cried, “you are both mine now !” and seizing them, he hugged them in his arms in a transport of delight. “Come,” he said, “you shall see your fellows,” and he moved toward the concealed recess. Again he overturned the image of the Virgin, but so rudely that it lay broken at his feet. Spurning it aside, he opened the secret panel, and began to draw forth the hidden gold, arranging it in little piles upon the floor ; then emptying the bags, he threw himself down at full length, and resting his face upon his hands, devoured the treasure with greedy eyes. Thus he remained for a long time, like one fascinated ; it seemed as though he wished to gaze forever at the objects of his adoration, and he heaved a deep sigh as he roused himself, and began to replace the contents of the bags. But his fingers lingered over this task ; he tested the weight of each golden plate and chalice, he flung about his neck the stolen chains, examined each richly carved drinking-cup ; he even pressed them to his heart and kissed them, before placing them in the waiting sacks. But finally the last article of plate was concealed from view, the last chain and coin deposited in the strong sacks, which he fastened securely, and Soulas rose to his feet, muttering to himself : “It is time for me to fly ; it must be mid-day by now. ’Tis well I provided so sure a place of concealment. All is ready and none will seek us there ; and if they do—ha, ha ! they will not find me ! No, no, I am

too old a fox to be caught ! I will be safe until I am ready to cross the sea. Ho, ho ! how well I deceived the silly knave who thought I would share with him ! a good youth—a brave youth—a wise youth ; and he *believed* me. Ho, ho, ho ! the silly fool !” Thus he talked to himself in broken and disconnected fashion, stopping now and then to laugh and rub his hands in glee. As he raised his eyes, however, he observed a dark shadow creeping over the wall before which he had knelt so long. “What is that ?” he murmured. “Surely it is not past mid-day !”

But in truth while he was lingering, lost in a golden dream, the day had waned and evening was close at hand. Engrossed in his one aim of enriching himself, elated at having ridded himself so easily of Pierre Gilles, and at having thus obtained the whole of the stolen treasure, the mayor had not given a thought to the result of the morning’s battle, and was ignorant of the defeat of the peasants. It is true that he was perfectly indifferent as to who were the victors, so that he made his escape in safety ; but he began to realize the necessity of doing this at once, and made haste to complete his preparations for flight. He picked up his cloak and wrapped it around him, unmindful of the fresh stains of blood upon it. He thrust some papers in his breast, and looked about the floor until he found the dagger with which he had stabbed Pierre, wiped it carefully and placed it in his belt. He then sought some means of concealing the gold he must carry away, for the bags were too heavy to be attached to his belt, and he dared not take them openly in his hands. At last he secured them about his waist by means of a stout cord, and the ample folds of his cloak hid them from view ; but he was scarcely able to walk, and staggered to the door bent almost double under his load. Drawing

back the bolt, he was surprised to find that the door resisted his efforts to open it, and suddenly remembering that Pierre had locked it at his bidding, turned to the shelf to fetch the key. But the key was not to be found. It was in vain that he searched the shelf, in vain that he examined his clothes and looked in every corner, feeling about the floor with his hands, and growing more impatient every moment, as the light faded and night drew on. At length he sat down and tried to recall everything that had occurred since he entered the room. He forced himself to think, but could not remember having seen the key since he had placed it in Pierre's hand. Suddenly the truth burst upon him, and he sprang to his feet with the cold sweat starting from his face in great drops, for he found himself entrapped, locked in this room from which it was so necessary for him to escape at once. "The cunning knave," he cried, "hid the key about his person, and he is—gone. Ah! I am caught—but yet the window. Hell and confusion! I can never wrench off those iron bars, and time presses; already it is dark, and I should have been far away ere now. If any one discovers me here, and sees these bloody stains I am surely lost. I must not be found," and he hurried to the window. As he reached it, Soulas was terrified at the sight of a sheet of flame that filled the court without; for the conflagration in the city had reached this house which was burning over his head, the buildings that surrounded the court were in a blaze, and he saw his only way of escape cut off by a sea of fire, that roared and stretched out its flaming arms as if to seize him. He grasped the iron bars and shook them with the strength of a madman, but they held fast, while the darting flames hissed mockingly, and crept nearer. The room grew hot, for the air that came through

the window was now like the breath of a furnace, and Soulas drew back from the iron bars which soon became red hot. Already he had clung to them until his hands were scorched, the hot iron had burned deep into the flesh, but he gave no heed to the pain, nor did he feel it, as, exhausted by the violence of his struggle, he sank upon the floor and glared wildly about. "Is there no way then, no way?" he groaned, and dragging himself to his feet he reached the door which he shook with the energy of despair. He shouted aloud, he screamed, he beat his hands and feet against the door: he who had been so fearful of discovery a few moments before, would now have welcomed his deadliest enemy, so he would have given him leave to stand an instant in the open air, and breathe. But there was no reply, no footstep sounded, no answering shout came to his straining ear. He tore off the cord that fastened the bags to his waist, he rushed about the room shrieking aloud and wringing his hands, until, gasping for breath and fainting with despair, he fell upon the floor groaning and murmuring to himself in broken words: "Ah! cursed Pierre, thrice accursed youth! Ah! fool, fool! to be thus ensnared," and then drawing himself painfully along, crawling, his hands slipping in the blood of his victim, he succeeded in dragging himself to the spot where he had flung down his gold, and a ghastly smile crossed his face, as he threw his arms around the sacks, embracing them in his feeble grasp and whispering: "O gold, bright gold, I love you. Save me, save me! my precious gold; save me from this hell! Ah! I burn! I burn! but I have you, even in hell!" and with his arms fast clasped about the wealth which he sought to retain even in death, Antoine Soulas at last lay motionless, but with wide open eyes still staring at the

red flames that seethed and roared and hissed in mockery, until they burst into the room, and a thousand fiery tongues licked up his gold, and danced in scorn around him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE news of the peasants' defeat spread like wildfire to the gates of Paris. Fugitive after fugitive arrived, bringing tidings of the fate of the Jacquier and of the capture of Guillaume Callet, who had fallen into the hands of the king of Navarre as he sought to escape from the field where Jacques and the greater part of his companions had perished. Of the unruly mob that had followed Pierre Gilles, only a few returned to hide themselves in the obscurity of their own parish; and the priests of St. Jacques were besieged for many a day, by widows who came to have masses said for the souls of their husbands.

The Trades that had clung to the Provost and upheld his authority, began to murmur as the Dauphin cut off the city's supplies from the south and east, while bands of adventurers harried the isle of France, and intercepted the provisions brought from the north. Without money and without bread, the people cried out that they were starving, and demanded that their Provost should give them food, or lead them out against the Navarrese who were ravaging the country. Yielding to their clamors he gave them permission to go, but the undisciplined rabble fell into the snares laid for them by those trained marauders, and suffered the penalty of their rashness. Enraged at their ill success, they exclaimed that they had been betrayed, and the Provost saw himself in imminent danger of falling a victim to those who had been his firmest friends. In this precarious situation, he sent

again and again to the king of Navarre, urging him to advance, and promising to deliver up the city to him ; but the king pleaded his need of money as an excuse for not complying with his request, and eagerly received the large sums which the Provost sent to him, while at the same time he carried on negotiations with his cousin the Dauphin, and deceived Marcel with plausible reasons for delay.

Count Guy had returned long since from Coucy, and had joined in the search made for Jeanne Maillart, but all efforts to discover her had been unsuccessful.

Pierre Gilles had disappeared also, and no trace of him could be found, but one of his friends who pitied the distress of the good wine-merchant, assured him that it was impossible that Pierre could have carried Jeanne away with him, for he had seen him depart alone. They concluded therefore, that she was concealed in Paris, and redoubled their efforts to find her, taking some comfort in the thought that Pierre had perhaps lost his life in Meux. Could Maillart have known the fate of his former servant, he would doubtless have rejoiced ; but unhappily he was ignorant of the punishment that had overtaken the vindictive youth, and for aught he knew his daughter might still be in his power.

As time wore on, however, he was forced to admit that further search was useless, and he gave up all hope of recovering the child so dear to him ; nor could the vicomte d'Ervand induce him to believe in the final success of efforts that had up to this time proved utterly unavailing. But the vicomte with the hopefulness of youth, declared that Jeanne could and should be found, and he employed all his energy in endeavoring to discover her hiding-place, and in truth he devoted himself to this object with the

more earnestness, as since leaving Maillart's house, he found it impossible to banish from his mind the memory of the pretty maiden, whose bright face and deft fingers had charmed away his ill humor and his pain. As he sat with count Guy, in his apartment at the Cerf Blanc, he confessed to his friend that the thought of never seeing Jeanne again caused him the greatest unhappiness, and vowed that he would yet discover her and make her his wife.

"If I can win her consent, my dear Guy," he said, "I shall be the happiest man in France."

"But, have you forgotten that she is only a merchant's daughter?" asked Guy.

"No, but I care not—I tell you that it shall be no barrier."

"Yet were she of gentle blood—"

"I swear to you, Guy," interrupted the vicomte, "that I love her, and will wed Jeanne Maillart. She shall bear my name, and who will dare question the nobility of a d'Ervand!"

"I doubt not that she will do honor to your name," returned Guy. "She is a charming girl. But we forget that she is—we know not where. I fear that we will never find her, Vicomte—and yet something may still be done: the worthy Maillart is so wretched. Have you marked his haggard look? and then, since you are unhappy too—Good faith! I realized it not before, but I can understand—" and Guy grasped his companion's hand as he spoke. "Yes, for if I should lose Yolande, I know—By heaven! you must have thought me cold, my dear Henri, but trust me I knew not that you were so in earnest—that you thought of Mistress Jeanne as I do of Yolande. Truly this love draws us closer to each other,

and being lovers we are dearer comrades. Come, we must follow this chase in company. May Heaven send good fortune!" and Guy finished his somewhat incoherent speech with a smile, and a closer pressure of the vicomte's hand, which he still held in his own.

Leaving the two friends to exchange their confidences, let us enter the kitchen of the inn where Robert Bonel is seated with Lanard. A jug of wine stood on the table between them, and a jovial smile overspread the innkeeper's face as he slowly poured out the liquor, watching the foaming bubbles that chased each other in miniature eddies about the cups.

"Drink," he said, "drink, friend Lanard, this is rare good wine, though 'tis I who say so," and he took a deep draught to emphasize his words.

Lanard raised his cup to his lips, saying: "To the black eyes of mistress Susanne, Robert."

"Here, Susanne," cried Bonel, "come hither and drink the health of master Lanard!"

"Willingly," said she, coming forward, "and I am sure the Cerf Blanc has been far pleasanter since he came, and sorry shall we be to have him go away."

"Why, so we will," exclaimed Bonel, "here, Susanne, drink you out of my cup," and putting his arm around the waist of his smiling wife, he drew her upon his knee.

Lanard touched his cup to hers, and gallantly saluted his pretty hostess as she drank to him. "Truly" said he, "when I see you so happy, Robert, I have a mind to turn innkeeper myself!"

Bonel shook his head as he replied, "'Tis no such happy life neither, when the streets are full of wandering soldiers who pay their reckoning with a scowl and an oath, travellers who pay one in outlandish coin, and

hungry students who never pay, but when they have filled their stomachs, swear they have not a *deniér*, and laugh in your face. The best of all are the merchants, for they like not to be cheated themselves, and are willing to settle their scores. But since these evil times began, friend Lanard, 'tis an ill life and without gain. Blessed Virgin! Susanne can tell you how hard it is to buy poultry and bread for your lord's table, and it grows worse every day."

Susanne nodded. "Yes" said she, "we shall soon have to live on fish and water, for there is nothing else to be bought in the market."

"Then we will keep Lent in August," returned Lanard laughing, "but let us hope it will not come to that, for I have no mind to fast more than once in the year, and pity it would be, Mistress Susanne, to see your red cheeks grow pale with hunger. But speaking of hunger reminds me of the lean and hungry wretches in la Cité; 'tis horrible to see them fighting like wolves over the bones in the streets, and ready to stab one another for a mouldy crust! Their good Provost had best look to himself, friend Robert, for these starvelings begin to growl, and if he does not soon give them bread, they will eat him bones and all."

"And little harm if they should," grumbled Robert; then, speaking to his wife he said, "Get you gone, Susanne, and look after the supper. What! would you sit all day on my knee and neglect the house? By the saints, I be no cushioned settle, and my bones be not made of wood neither, so please you!"

"You were glad enough once to have me sit on your knee," returned Susanne with a pout.

"And so I am still, wench, but you are no feather, and

the supper must be looked to ; so away with you ! but you may give me a kiss before you go, if you like."

" Give you a kiss, indeed ! " rejoined she, as she disappeared with an offended air.

Robert drew himself up with conscious dignity, and turning to his companion said : " When you have a wife, friend Lanard, there is one thing you must teach her first of all, or it will be worse for you."

" And what is it ? " asked Lanard, laughing.

" 'Tis to obey you," replied Robert.

" I should think that would be wise, but is it not hard to do ? "

Bonel pointed his finger at his companion and answered very gravely. " Hard ? " said he, " why no, so you go the right way about it, as I did, and now Susanne knows that I am the master, and when I say to her go and attend to the supper, she does not stop to ask why ; it is enough that I wish it, and there lies the great secret, comrade : so remember to teach your wife to ask no questions, for if you once begin to reason with her, Holy Virgin ! Oh, Holy Virgin ! "

" And what then ? " demanded Lanard much amused.

Robert cast a pitying glance at him. " 'Tis plain you know little about the matter," said he, " but a woman's tongue once loosened runs faster than a mountain torrent."

" But there must be some way to stop it, friend Robert, and faith, you should be able to tell, you who know so much about it."

" Why," rejoined Bonel, " to confess the truth, comrade, I never could find any way myself, and I doubt if it can be done, and so I warn you. But take my advice, and when you marry get a firm hold of the reins, for " he con-

tinued solemnly, "when a woman once takes the bit in her teeth she is the devil."

Lanard laughed and thanked him for his warning, which he promised to remember when he selected a wife. He was, however, much inclined to doubt whether Susanne had been so thoroughly subdued as Robert would have had him believe, and the sight of her dress, as she crossed the street and entered the house of a neighbor, confirmed him in the belief that this model of obedience was quite capable of disobeying her husband's commands when she chose to do so. But after all is said, half the joy of life is in the facility with which we suffer ourselves to be deluded, and perhaps some such thought crossed Lanard's mind as he watched the self-satisfied expression on Robert's face, and decided that it would be a pity to disturb it by telling him that Susanne was at that moment gossiping with a neighbor, instead of making preparations for supper. He remained silent therefore, looking at Robert, who, having relieved his mind by asserting that he was master in his own house, was lolling on his seat, his feet crossed and his eyes half closed, as though the enjoyment of the moment was his only care, and the world might wag as it would. But he presently opened his eyes and blinked hard at his companion. "Holy Virgin!" said he, stretching his arms with a prodigious yawn, "here we sit as silent as two owls; what ails you, Lanard, that you sit with your tongue between your teeth?"

"Would you have me talk to the wall?" retorted he. "Faith, when you fall asleep before my very face, how am I to talk to you?"

"Oh, I was not asleep," said Robert, "but this hot afternoon makes one drowsy, comrade."

"Yes, that is true, and this is no bad place to sit and

nod in, of a hot day. How long have you been here, Robert? how long have you been master of this snug inn?"

"A matter of ten years, friend Larnard, or mayhap twelve, for I took it first before the battle of Crécy. By the saints! I remember well how I raged when I heard that war had broken out, and I had not followed my lord, the marquis; for I was younger then and loved to hear the clash of swords."

"You would have heard enough of that music if you had been at Crécy, Robert."

"Yes, yes," replied he, slowly, "and I say not that I care now; but then I was as restive as a young horse and cursed the inn, and all beside that hindered me from striking a blow against the English. May they be damned forever, those outlandish thieves, who have been worse than the blight and the mildew, bloody vampires that they are!"

"You are right, Robert, and I wish the earth would open and swallow them; but let us have patience and God will punish them."

"Patience!" cried Robert, "and while we wait, they trample down our harvests and devour the land: yes, and who knows, when the truce is over, but they will send a fresh swarm of their beef-eating devils to torment us."

"Like enough," returned Lanard, "but if war breaks out you must turn man-at-arms again, ha, Robert?"

"That I will, I have not yet forgotten how to handle spear and sword, and 'tis the only life to lead in these days: the holiest saint of them all would gird sword and dagger to his side and wear an iron coat, if he lived now on the earth, yes, and rob and kill his neighbor like the rest."

"'Tis not yet so bad," said Lanard, laughing. "There is your lord marquis, he would not rob and kill his neighbor, Robert."

"No, no, devil take me, I said not so! and God forbid that all should be so wicked, but my lord marquis is more kind and generous than most, and lucky is he who serves him. His brother was a brave nobleman, too; a sad day it was when his lady died," he added musingly.

"Why, we must all die at last," said Lanard, "and besides—"

"Yes," interrupted Robert, "but when one dies of grief you know—Hold! I will e'en tell you about it, but first fill up your cup. You are no such drinker as Rolin. Faith, his cup is no sooner empty than he fills it again, and 'tis dry as my hand in a twinkling."

"Yes, these students are merry drinkers, Robert, but what is this about the brother of the marquis de la Rivière?"

"Why, you must know," rejoined Bonel, "that he was a handsome nobleman and spoke fair words to all, so that he was much beloved; and faith, comrade, he was such a man as one would blithely put his life in peril for, if he but smiled on him. Well, there was a pretty maiden, the daughter of a peasant woman named Blanche, and he had ever a smile for her, and when he passed her mother's cottage and saw the girl standing at the door, he would often stop, and mayhap he would tell her that her cheeks were like the wild roses in the wood, and snatch a kiss from her lips and go his way leaving a piece of gold in her hand. And I know not what foolish dreams filled the girl's head, but when my lord no longer passed the cottage door, and she heard that he was wedded to a fair and noble lady, she drooped her head

and seemed like one distraught, until one night her mother missed her, and they found her body in a deep pool within the forest. Blanche did nothing but weep and moan, and cry out that the wicked lord (as she called the brother of my lord marquis) had killed her child, until she grew crazed, and her gossips said she went about whispering to herself that she would be revenged; but they paid no heed, and only laughed when she fell into one of her wild fits. But they laughed no longer, comrade, when they found that she had the evil eye, and some of their children who played near the cottage door fell sick. Two of them died, and the others would answer naught but that Blanche had looked at them. I remember well, for I was a stout youth at the time, that I would run a mile about, rather than follow the path that ran past her hut, and we all feared to meet her lest she should curse us with a look. So she lived alone, until the little daughter born to my lady countess was mayhap a year old: then one day the child was lost, and Blanche disappeared. The country was searched far and wide, but the child was never found, and my lady countess died of grief when she heard that her infant had been stolen away by the woman who had the evil eye, and my lord count was killed at the battle of Crécy. I know not what brought it to my mind to-night, for it happened long ago, full eighteen years. Holy Virgin, how the time goes! twelve years come vintage time since I married Susanne, and it seems but yesterday, friend Lanard. Faith of my soul! what a pretty sight it was to see her that day, with her scarlet petticoat and blue bodice laced with silver, a wreath of red berries in her hair, and her eyes sparkling like the sun!"

"I warrant that many a stout lad envied you," said Lanard.

"That they did, for Susanne was the prettiest girl in all the country side."

"And so she is still, Robert, and a good wife to you I would swear."

"Yes," returned Bonel, "that she is," and he looked complacently about the room, whose sanded floor and well scoured dressers bore witness to Susanne's good house-wifery.

"'Tis all as neat as wax," said Lanard, following his companion's glance. "Come, Robert, confess you would not exchange all this for an iron hauberk and buff coat, long days in the saddle, the damp ground for a bed and perchance a spear thrust to end all. Trust me, 'tis better to live snugly here in your inn, than to go hungry and thirsty and have your sleep broken by blasts of the trumpet!"

"You speak truth, comrade, and yet I long for the old life sometimes. By the saints! when I heard how my lord marquis overthrew the peasants before Meux, I wished to be a man-at-arms once more, for this lazy life hath not quenched all my spirit yet. Zounds! I could strike you a stout blow once!"

"I believe you, and beshrew me if you have forgotten your skill," replied Lanard laughing as he spoke, for Bonel had got upon his feet and was thrusting his arms about as though they had been weapons; but in his excitement, he fetched his companion such a buffet on the head as nearly knocked him from his seat.

"The devil!" exclaimed Lanard, "you have a heavy hand, you have well-nigh broken my crown."

A look of comical distress overspread Robert's face. "Holy Virgin!" said he, "what have I done?"

"A trifle, a mere bruise," replied Lanard, rubbing his head.

"But I have hurt you, comrade. Forgive me."

"'Tis nothing, Robert, I am well used to hard knocks. Sit down, man, fill me a cup of wine, and tell me whether you have heard news of Pierre Gilles."

"Never a word. Some say he is dead. I hope he is. Had you but seen him ready to march, you would have died of laughter. Ha, ha! a fine sight it was to see him strutting about the quay, for all the world like an ape with a kitchen skillet on his head. Ho, ho! and a sword that got between his legs at every step. But if he be alive he had best not show his face in Paris, for there be swords here ready to take his life."

"He is too base to die by a brave man's sword," said Lanard contemptuously; "a hempen cord befits such knaves as he. And none have seen master Maillart's daughter, and we have searched the city through; 'tis strange enough. My lord d'Ervand takes her loss much to heart. Ha, Robert?"

"Yes," answered he with a nod of his head. "In faith, one would think she was his sister, so anxious is he to find her. He takes no pleasure in anything now, and never laughs; such a merry gentleman as he was too. Holy Virgin! 'tis a great pity to see him so changed! but I know what would cheer him up. Ha, ha! comrade."

"And what then?" asked Lanard.

"Why," rejoined Robert, winking mysteriously, and wagging his head from side to side: "'tis not for me to say, but I know what I know. Ha, ha! you understand me, comrade?"

They were at this moment interrupted by Rolin, who,

his cap on one side, his dress in disorder, and breathless with running, burst into the room where he sank down upon a bench unable to speak, but motioning with his hands to the wine jug on the table. Bonel stared at him in astonishment, but Lanard seized the jug and poured out a cup of wine, which the student swallowed at a gulp gasping out, "I have found her! I have found her!"

"Who? What mean you?" cried both together.

"Give me time to get my breath and I will tell you," said Rolin, holding out his cup for more wine: then finding his voice, he went on. "Why, master Maillart's daughter to be sure, who else? But where is the count de la Roche? I must see him instantly!"

"He is yonder in his chamber with my lord vicomte," replied Robert, "but tell us before you go."

"You shall hear anon!" shouted Rolin, who was already half way up the stairs, where he entered the count's apartment without ceremony, and flinging his cap in the air cried out that he had seen Jeanne Maillart. As soon as he had recovered from his excitement, he began to tell in his own fashion how he had stumbled upon her hiding-place.

"I was taking a long walk," he said, "and because I have been neglecting my studies of late, I was beating my brains to find an answer to an argument propounded in our last lecture, and I walked on perplexing my mind with that question, and giving no heed to my steps, until all at once I saw how I could solve the difficulty by a counter argument. So I gave a great shout, my lords, whirling my stick over my head (for 'tis a way I have when I am excited), and bringing it down with all my strength, thinking that so would I dash to pieces the false philosophy; but my stick fell on a rock, and there

was I face to face with a high stone wall. I stood laughing to myself, and wondering how I could have come so close to a thing without seeing it, and wishing I could just take a look into the garden, when suddenly a white scarf was pushed through a crevice in the wall some distance from me. By St. Geneviève! that surprised me, and all my fine arguments flew out of my head faster than birds from their cover! but it took only an instant for me to reach the place and recognize the voice of master Maillart's daughter, who begged me to hasten to her father and tell him that she was alive and well."

"Have you seen him?" asked Guy.

"No, my lord, for mistress Jeanne told me that which brought me back in haste to seek you."

"Speak quickly then, good Rolin."

"I will, my lord. In the first place mistress Jeanne is in the hands of the king of Navarre, and it was the baron de Roye who fetched her away from the Provost's house where Pierre Gilles carried her; they have treated her kindly although they hold her prisoner, she knows not why. But the most important thing is that the Provost has at last betrayed the city, and means to give it up to the king of Navarre this very night."

"How say you!" cried Guy.

"'Tis true, my lord."

"But, good Rolin, how could she tell thee this? how could she know?"

"The devil fly away with me if I can say, my lord! and she had no time to explain for she was watched, but she begged me to warn you, and here I am."

"Well, be her warning true or false, it shall be my task to foil the treacherous Provost, and thou," said

Guy, turning to the vicomte, "must undertake to rescue mistress Jeanne. Rolin will guide thee."

The vicomte looked perplexed. "By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "I know not what to do, for although I have sworn to restore Jeanne to her father, yet since danger threatens, I am bound in friendship, Guy, to stand side by side with thee to-night, and so, say no more about my leaving thee. Perhaps to-morrow."

Guy drew his friend aside, and whispered a few words which appeared to convince him of the urgent necessity of seeking Jeanne at once, for after a feeble protest he yielded to Guy's persuasion, his brow cleared, and he began to make preparations for his departure. Bidding Lanard choose some eight or ten men-at-arms to follow him, he asked Rolin whether he would accompany him. But he declared that the vicomte could not miss the road, that he would be of no assistance, and that the count would probably require his services.

"You are right, Rolin," said d'Ervand. "Stay with the count, my good fellow. I would it were not needful for me to quit Paris to-night. Ah! here is Lanard saying that my men are on horseback. Adieu, Guy. I shall join you ere morning."

"Adieu, Henri. Bring mistress Jeanne back. Fortune attend thee."

The vicomte hurried away and Guy turned to Lanard and the student who remained in the room. "Do you know," he said, smiling, "that to-morrow will look upon us dead, unless we make ourselves masters of the gates of Paris to-night?"

"It may well be, my lord," rejoined Lanard unconcernedly, "for many things may happen in a night and who was ever sure of to-morrow?"

The student twisted his beard and looked thoughtfully on the ground. "This devil of a Provost," said he, slowly, "would give me a short shrift did he know what I have been about!"

"And do you regret it?" asked the count, casting a scrutinizing look upon him.

"Not I," exclaimed Rolin, "I am for the king and the Dauphin to the death! Nevertheless I confess that I have no taste for the halter of hems which the worshipful Provost will provide for my entertainment, if he lays hands on me. Yet fear not for me, my lord. By my soul, I will stand fast by you, and if we come alive out of this cursed affair, I ask no other reward than that you give me a few lessons in swordsmanship."

"With all my heart," said Guy good-humoredly, "and there is my hand upon it. Now go you both down and bid Robert give you some supper. Do you, Lanard, despatch a messenger to master Maillart, and desire him to come hither instantly, for he must learn what has befallen his daughter. When he arrives, you will all come to my chamber, and I will show you the work we have to do. Away with you, the sun is setting, it will be dusk in half an hour."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE neglected mansion where Jeanne Maillart had been so securely hidden was shunned by all who knew the evil traditions in regard to it. But this did not prevent the baron de Roye from occupying it sometimes. And upon the eve of the attempt which his lord the king of Navarre was about to make upon Paris, he had come hither to see Jeanne. Leaving the men-at-arms who had attended him, in the lower hall, he went slowly up the stairway, and entering a room, threw himself upon a seat. He was followed by his personal attendant, Martin, who, standing behind his master, waited in perfect silence until the baron should choose to speak. For some moments, however, de Roye remained motionless, staring at the fire, which, although it was scarce past midsummer, burned upon the hearth, and was in truth necessary to remove the chill from this damp and gloomy apartment.

Finally, he rose and began to pace restlessly to and fro; a sudden memory oppressed his mind. "Ha," he muttered, "it was an evil omen! Martin," cried he, abruptly, "come hither, tell me, had'st ever a hideous dream that came not true?"

"Yes, noble lord," replied the man. "I dreamed before the battle of Poitiers that I was lying on the ground with an English arrow in my heart."

"And you are here alive! then perchance my dream was false! listen, Martin. Last night I fell asleep, and methought I saw myself stretched dead upon the floor, and

the blood flowed forth from a gaping wound into a red pool beside me."

"'Tis a soldier's death, my lord," said Martin.

"Yes, yes, I know, but then, that was not all; for in my dream I saw my soul hovering over my body, as though it knew not whether to go this way or that, and an angel came and looked upon it, and turned his face aside, and vanished, while the soul remained, and I heard it bewailing its hard fate, and ever murmuring: 'Now am I an outcast, for I may not return to my body, and alas, Heaven rejects me! whither then shall I go, unhappy that I am!' and while it was wailing thus, the Fiend came shrieking, 'You are mine! come with me,' and he laughed horribly, mocking my hapless soul as he bore it away."

"It was a fearful dream, my lord," said Martin crossing himself, and adding, hesitatingly, "Think not on it, for 'tis ill brooding over such things: belike 'tis this gloomy house."

"Yes," rejoined the baron, "the place is dismal as the grave. We will leave it to-night, and, by St. Peter! it is almost time for us to be on our way. Do you wait for me in the hall."

He left the room, and a few moments later entered Jeanne Maillart's apartment. She was surprised and not a little alarmed at his sudden appearance, for he had not before intruded upon her privacy, and her first thought was that her interview with Rolin had been discovered. But the respectful manner in which the baron addressed her proved that her alarm was groundless; and in fact he came for the purpose of telling Jeanne his reasons for carrying her away from the Provost's house. His curiosity had been aroused by finding the locket she had lost, and after seeing that it contained the portrait of the countess,

and the arms of the house of de la Rivière, he determined to discover how the trinket came to be in her possession. With this object in view, he induced the king of Navarre to go with him to the solitary abode of mad Blanche, a part of whose story he knew before, and, although what the king had skilfully coaxed her to relate, was wild and almost unintelligible, the baron's knowledge of the events that had really taken place enabled him to understand it readily enough, and he had little doubt that Jeanne was not the child of the worthy Maillart, but the niece of the marquis de la Rivière and heiress of the estates of his brother. Assuming as mild a demeanor as he could, he told her what he believed to be the truth in regard to her birth, assuring her that she had been removed from the Provost's house and forcibly detained, to protect the daughter of a noble from the danger of falling again into the hands of a villain like Pierre Gilles; and declaring that the king of Navarre had in his possession, or could procure all the proofs necessary to establish her right and claim. But the incredulous smile with which she listened provoked the baron and he exclaimed: "One would think, fair mistress, that you cared not to learn that you are the daughter of a noble house and not the child of a pitiful merchant; or perhaps you think I am deceiving you."

"'Tis unkind of you, my lord," replied Jeanne, "to make a jest of me. It is true," she continued, with some spirit, "it is true that my father is but a pitiful merchant, yet were he here you had not dared to treat me thus!"

"Of what do you complain, fair mistress?" rejoined the baron. "Do you not live in comfort here, well served, and with liberty to amuse yourself as you list, so you go not beyond the walls, and if you wish for other company

than of Catherine here, am I not ready to devote myself to your commands?" and he bowed to her with mock solemnity.

Jeanne shrank away from him, and her cheek flushed with anger as she replied: "But by what right do you keep me imprisoned here, my lord? I have done no harm to you, or any one, and it was cruel to take me away from the kind Provost, who would have sent me back to my father's house."

"Soho, mistress, small thanks you give me for saving you from the hands of Pierre Gilles! but perhaps you went willingly enough with him, and cared not to return at all," and a slight sneer curled the baron's lip as he spoke.

Jeanne's eyes flashed, and she stamped her foot upon the floor. "I hate him!" she exclaimed, "and you,—I hate you too, for you are a wicked man to speak so to me!"

"Gently, gently," rejoined the baron, laughing. "Do not fly into a rage, though by my faith, it becomes you well. Ha, no wonder the poor youth was bewitched by those bright eyes and glowing cheeks; and so you loved him not?"

But a gesture of repugnance was the only reply he received, and he went on: "Perchance the young vicomte who lay wounded at Master Maillart's house was more fortunate, and you sigh for him. Aha, fair mistress," as Jeanne started, and a deep flush overspread her face, "is it thus? then, by heaven, you have more to thank me for than you know. Ha, ha, a shrewd guess, upon my word."

Jeanne made a violent effort to recover her self-control, and answered with as much calmness as she could assume:

"I should owe you thanks, my lord, if you would let me leave this dismal place. Surely there is no need for me to stay here longer. Oh, I pray you to remember that my mother will mourn for me as dead!" and she clasped her hands, looking at him with entreating eyes.

"St. Peter!" the baron muttered under his breath; "that pleading look might move a heart less hard than mine; but the maiden must stay here until I return. Fair mistress," he said aloud, "'tis a pretty attitude, and your eyes plead earnestly, yet must I deny your will; here you shall stay until the marquis owns you for his niece."

"Then shall I stay here forever to be mocked by you!" cried Jeanne. "Oh, you are more hard hearted than the wicked count who killed his lady here so cruelly!"

"Truly, I believe I am somewhat hard and stern," replied the baron laughing, "but has Agnes, that old gossip, been filling your head with silly tales about this house?"

"She is not an old gossip, and they are not silly tales," cried Jeanne indignantly.

"Well, but why did the wicked count put his lady to death?"

"I will not tell you. Why should I, my lord? You say they are foolish tales."

"Because I wish to hear," said the baron rudely. "Come, fair mistress, do not refuse because I will not send you back to Paris instantly."

But she shook her head; and provoked by her obstinacy he exclaimed: "There is no need for you to be so peevish, mistress; and methinks thou art not over courteous to liken me to the count of Touraine,—for I know the story well enough."

"And if you knew it, why did you ask me to tell it you?" demanded Jeanne.

"To please myself, and pass away the time; but come," said the baron with a laugh, "dost truly think I would treat a lady so harshly?"

"I do; you would be as merciless as he if your wife displeased you!"

"Ha, ha," laughed the baron. "He who weds thee will have need to pray Heaven for patience."

"And she who weds thee will quickly repent," retorted Jeanne.

"By my soul, fair mistress, you are somewhat bold! but let it pass, I like you the better that you are not so craven hearted as I thought."

"I care not for your liking, my lord, and I hate you with all my heart!" and Jeanne turned her back upon him as she spoke.

"Well, 'tis all one to me, and I bear no malice for a few sharp words. But what is that?" said the baron. "Did you not hear the trampling of feet below, fair mistress? what is the meaning of those shouts? ha, there is clashing of swords. By St. Peter! yon knaves are ever quarrelling among themselves! I must go and separate them. Adieu, mistress," and he quitted the apartment hastily.

Jeanne breathed a deep sigh of relief as he disappeared, and turning to Catherine who had been a silent witness of the scene that had just taken place, she exclaimed: "Oh, how thankful I am that he has gone at last! Were you frightened, Catherine?"

"I was frightened for you, Mistress Jeanne, when you answered the baron so boldly, but I prayed our Lady

to have you in her keeping. May she be gracious to us ! ”

“ We had best pray that she have us in her keeping now,” replied Jeanne, “ for the noise below grows louder and louder. Oh, Catherine, can it be that he has come ? ”

“ That who has come, Mistress Jeanne ? ”

“ The vicom— Rolin, the student—you know Catherine— Oh ! if the baron should take his life, what would become of me ? ”

“ What is Rolin to you ? and if he does lose his life, you will be no worse off than now. Holy angels preserve us ! what a dreadful din they make down there, with their stamping and cursing and ringing of armor. Hark ! ” as a heavy fall was heard, “ listen to that, Mistress Jeanne.” There was a moment of silence, and then the tramp of armed feet was heard upon the stairway and along the corridors.

“ Our Lady forgive me ! ” cried Catherine, as a loud knock sounded on the door. “ I have forgotten to draw the bolt ! But I will e’en see who knocks, for they can but kill us at worst ; one death is as good as another, but long life is a blessed thing. Holy Lady keep us from sin ! ” she ejaculated, as she laid her hand on the lock, and threw open the door, where she was confronted by the vicomte d’Ervand.

“ Where is your mistress ? ” demanded he.

Before she had time to reply, Jeanne darted forward with a cry of joy, and the vicomte, seizing her in his arms, exclaimed : “ Ah, Jeanne, thank Heaven I have found you ! now shall you not again escape me, for I swear by heaven that you shall be my wife ! None shall prevent, none shall oppose our love. For you know well that I love you, and if your eyes speak truth—nay, do not

shake that wilful head. Your eyes have betrayed the secret of your heart, the secret that trembles on your lips. What do I hear—so faint a whisper? Why, love, thy eyes speak bravely, but what a coward voice! Courage, sweet one. Ah well, those blushes answer for thee. Come then, dear Jeanne, time flies, and we must begone instantly,” and drawing her away, he conducted her to the hall below, followed by the wondering and bewildered Catherine.

The four attendants of the baron de Roye with their hands fast bound, looked dejected enough as they stood in a corner of the hall, where they were carefully guarded by the vicomte’s men-at-arms. As Jeanne entered, her eye fell upon this group standing half concealed in the gloom, and she shuddered as she glanced involuntarily at a motionless form that lay near by. The flame of a torch held by one of the men-at-arms revealed to her the body of the baron de Roye, and it was with horror that she looked for the last time upon that dark face with its frowning brow, and lips half parted in a reckless smile. But the vicomte hurried her away; and indeed she had no wish to linger, but breathed more freely when she found herself in the open air. Nor did she turn her face for a parting glance at the chateau within whose walls she had spent so weary a time.

Silently they left this gloomy abode. Silent and desolate and cold it stood, guarding its guilty secrets, and engulfed in the blackness of the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

As he rode toward Paris, d'Ervand was in far too joyful a mood to give a thought to the dismal scene behind. Elated at the success of his exploit, and happy in the consciousness of being loved, he forgot the dangers of the road, forgot that he should hurry forward to rejoin his friends, and only remembered that Jeanne rode by his side—only recalled the sweet confession she had whispered in the moment of their meeting. "I love thee, I love thee, Henri."

But whether she was vexed at having been startled into making this confession, or whether she was unable to shake off the depressing influence of the place they had just left, she suddenly became more silent and reserved than seemed consistent with the joyful welcome she had bestowed upon her companion when he appeared at the door of her chamber. And the ladies can best decide whether she acted prudently in replying to the passionate avowals of the vicomte by unintelligible murmurs, or at most by a slight pressure of the hand when it happened that their horses stepped close together.

They were approaching Paris when d'Ervand remembered that it might not be easy to enter the city at so late an hour, and resolved to make a detour to the right and endeavor to gain an entrance at the gate St. Jacques, instead of that of Nesle which was much nearer, but where he would no doubt be detained and questioned by the Provost's guard. He drew rein for a moment in order

to explain this change of route to his men, and had just rejoined Jeanne when he heard the tramp of horses on the road over which they had come. This, however, would have caused him no uneasiness, had it not been that upon leaving the chateau where he had found Jeanne, he had imprudently set free the servants of the baron de Roye, and he remembered with some alarm that it was only too probable that they had found companions willing to join them in pursuing him.

He therefore ordered his men to push their horses to speed, and seizing the rein of the animal Jeanne rode, spurred on as fast as possible. But he was soon aware that they were being overtaken, and halting his party he placed Jeanne and Catherine in the centre, and bade his men stand firm and defend themselves should they be attacked. He had scarcely time to do this before about twenty-five horsemen dashed up at full speed, and fell furiously upon the little band of men-at-arms. The troopers struggled bravely, but, taken by surprise and outnumbered were quickly beaten down, while d'Ervand, who sought to protect Jeanne and Catherine also, was too busily engaged in warding off the blows which fell fast about them, to heed the assailants who pressed against him in the confusion, and soon found himself unable to wheel his horse. His bridle rein was seized by eager hands, and he was desired to surrender himself.

It would have been madness to refuse, for his followers were overpowered, and more than one spear was pointed at his breast. It was necessary to submit with as good a grace as possible. "I yield me to your leader," he said, "rescue or no rescue, and demand courteous treatment for the lady here under my protection."

"Granted," replied a voice, and the speaker, pushing

his horse through the crowd, approached the vicomte. "Sir," he said, "it may be that I have been over hasty in this rude attack. Good faith! I knew not that there was a lady in your company, or you should have gone your way in peace."

"How, sir?" replied d'Ervand, "I understand you not."

"*Pardieu*, 'tis little wonder!" exclaimed the other, laughing. "But by your leave, fair sir, since we have met thus I must ask you in courtesy to ride a little way with me, for my lord hath given strict command that none who bear arms may enter Paris this night. So, please you, say to your lady not to fear, for she shall not leave you, and by the faith of a Gascon gentleman, the sword of Roger de Carmain is pledged to defend her."

He then saluted the vicomte, and drawing his men up in marching order gave the word to advance. After a rapid ride of half an hour they arrived at the bank of the Seine. A large boat was waiting there, and in this the leader of the party embarked with a part of his troop. They were no sooner in the stream, than he seated himself by the side of the vicomte, who instantly inquired why he had been attacked and made prisoner on the king's highway.

The Gascon laughed. "I think," said he, "that I should rather ask how you could hope to journey unmolested in these times, when even the king's road swarms with soldiers and vagabonds; to say nothing of the gentlemen of the Free Companies, and the hired bandits of his Holiness of Avignon!"

"True," returned d'Ervand, "and I am more fortunate, I trow, than I deserve, to escape their lances. But tell me, what chance threw you in my path to-night?"

"You will say it was an evil chance at best," rejoined the Gascon, "and truly do I now regret having listened to yonder knaves who begged me to follow you and avenge the death of their lord, the baron de Roye. I know not what fiend persuaded me to meddle with what concerns me not; for, by my soul, the baron was no friend to me, nor I to him I ween! No lover of dames was he, and no merry heart like Roger Carmain, who is not ashamed to confess, that 'tis better to be a fool through love, than a savage without.

'Love is the rose of life,
Toujours et toujours !'

What sayest thou?" and the voluble Gascon leaned familiarly on the vicomte's shoulder as he spoke.

"Good faith!" replied d'Ervand, "you speak like one who would brook no delay in his wooing; but carry a lady's heart as we do a fortress—by assault!"

"We Gascons," exclaimed de Carmain, "wear our hearts upon our sleeves, and live merrily, sword in hand. Love laughs at us, and we at him, for—

'Love is our lord, as we march through the world
With harness on back, and pennons unfurled.'

But here we are at the land," and leaping lightly to the shore, he courteously assisted Jeanne to disembark, and set forward on foot with those whom chance had so strangely thrown in his path. He warned the vicomte that if his lord the king of Navarre were to hear of the death of the baron de Roye he would be deeply enraged, "for" said he, "the baron was deep in his counsels, and the king is even now expecting him at the chateau whither we are going." He added, however, that it should not be his

fault if the secret came to his master's ears. For, impulsive and warm-hearted, like a true son of the South, he already began to look upon d'Ervand as a friend and good comrade, while he treated Jeanne with a frank admiration, which, although somewhat amusing, was perfectly respectful and by no means disagreeable. And the young vicomte, chagrined though he was at the unlucky result of his adventure, could not help being attracted by the merry jesting humor of de Carmain, who enlivened the way with so many marvellous stories and absurd descriptions of his own exploits, that even Jeanne forgot the unpleasant situation in which she was placed, and joined merrily in the laughter provoked by the irrepressible tongue of their new friend. But she began to feel the effects of the excitement she had undergone. An excessive languor crept over her, her elastic steps became weary and uncertain, and she was ere long obliged to lean heavily on the vicomte's arm; and however pleasant it might have been for him to support the faltering steps of the fair girl, he was nevertheless extremely anxious to reach a place where she would be able to rest.

It was then with a feeling of relief that he heard Carmain announce that they had reached their destination, and glancing up saw the walls and turrets of a large hotel just before them. Bending down, he whispered a few words of encouragement to Jeanne, and placing his arm tenderly about her, half supported, half carried her as he followed the Gascon through the gate into a courtyard. In the midst of this enclosure a large fire was burning, but probably in order that it might not attract attention from a distance, it had been allowed to die down, and was now a huge mass of glowing embers, whose fitful flashes threw a circle of red light around. About the fire

was gathered a group of armed men, some of whom stood leaning on their spears, while others lay on the stone pavement and slept, or sought to snatch a little sleep as best they might on that rude couch. Beyond this group a body of archers stood on guard, and several fully caparisoned steeds were being led up and down before the entrance of the hotel.

The clattering of the horses' feet upon the pavement, the ringing of armor and bursts of hoarse laughter from the soldiers who stood around the fire, the lurid flare of the torches borne by servants who hurried hither and thither, carrying great stoups of wine to the archers and men-at-arms—all was in startling contrast to the darkness and silence through which our friends had come. The Gascon, with more delicacy of feeling than might have been expected from a soldier of fortune placed himself in such a position as to shield Jeanne in some measure from the inquisitive glances thrown upon her, and hurried forward. He exchanged a careless nod and a few words with the captain of the archers, who addressed him by name as he passed, and then with a slight smile waved his hand and motioned him on.

Mounting a flight of steps to the principal entrance of the hotel, they found themselves in a broad and lofty hall which they traversed hurriedly, and turning to the left, entered a sort of ante-chamber where they found an elderly man of stern and dignified bearing. This was de Mortery, the king's chamberlain; and he glanced with some surprise at de Carmain, frowning a little as he observed the strangers with him. He then drew the Gascon aside and informed him that the king desired to see him the moment of his return. They conversed together for a few moments, and de Carmain then hur-

ried away after assuring the vicomte that he would soon return. He was absent a considerable time, and as the minutes passed d'Ervand's impatience increased. For Jeanne had sunk down upon a bench, or rude settle, the only resting-place the room afforded, and lay there with closed eyes, and cheeks from which the flush of excitement was fast receding and giving place to the pallor of utter exhaustion. Doubtless this was but the natural result of the excessive fatigue and terror she had undergone, although d'Ervand observed her condition with anxiety and alarm. Her heavy eyelids drooped until the silken lashes swept her pale cheeks, and there was a look of deadly weariness in her great black eyes, when she opened them for an instant as he bent over her and touched her hand. But the answering pressure of her fingers told him that she read the love in his eyes; a smile trembled on her lips, and she murmured; "My Henri—love, I am safe with thee!"

He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it passionately, and wrapping her carefully in the mantle which had fallen from her shoulders, placed his own cloak for a pillow beneath her head, and stood beside her while she fell into a heavy slumber.

Absorbed in his own thoughts he replied but briefly if at all to the woman, Catherine, who demanded whether her young mistress was to remain all night on a bench in a room full of men, and complained bitterly of her own aches and bruises. And it was little wonder if the poor creature found herself suffering from the effects of her ride; for, placed on horseback for the first time in her life and sorely against her will, her terror had been considerably augmented by the rude attention of the two troopers between whom she was placed, and whose ut-

most efforts had scarcely availed to keep her in the saddle. Indeed she had arrived at her journey's end sadly bruised and shaken, and feeling as she said, as though her arms had been torn out of their sockets, and her whole body beaten with a flail. She obtained little sympathy however from the vicomte, and finally sank grumbling upon her knees in the corner, where it is possible that she found some relief in her fervent prayers to the saints, as well as in groans and muttered anathemas upon those who were not satisfied with the two legs Heaven had bestowed upon them, but must forsooth rack their bones and bruise their bodies on the backs of four footed beasts.

In the mean time the chamberlain appeared to be perfectly indifferent to the distress of the strangers (in truth he did not know whether to regard them as guests or prisoners) whom de Carmain had left in his charge. Nevertheless, he was relieved to hear the sound of approaching footsteps, and to see the cheerful face of the Gascon appear at the door a moment after.

"Ha, Mortery," cried he, as he entered, "where are our guests?" Then throwing a swift glance around, he crossed the room and laid his hand on the vicomte's arm. "Ah," he said in a low voice, "so the lady has fallen asleep," and irresistibly attracted by her sweet face, he gazed long and earnestly upon her. "By St Mary!" he whispered, and an expression of mingled admiration and pity came into his eyes. "By St. Mary, she is fair! Well, well, 'twere pity to waken her, although she must be in sad need of food, for sleep is sometimes better than food or wine. Yet she must have a more fitting couch, and so she shall if there be such in this deserted place!" and beckoning to the chamberlain, "Hark ye!

Mortery, is there never a chamber where this maiden may rest in comfort and undisturbed? Our lord commands that she be treated with all gentle courtesy. And truly " he added in a lower tone to the vicomte, "she doth well deserve it for the sake of her own sweet lips, that smile even in sleep, and the jet black tresses that remind me of my far off land. My soul! you are a happy man to be beloved, as well I trust you be, by one so fair! "

D'Ervand flushed slightly, as he replied: "I love, and am beloved. 'Tis happiness enough; but speak no more of it, I pray. Here comes your friend again." And Mortery who had left the room, returned to say that he had found an apartment that might serve for the two women.

The vicomte then desired Catherine to rouse her mistress, but she declined to do so, saying that she was able to carry her; and taking Jeanne in her arms she followed Mortery, who led the way to a chamber more comfortably furnished than that they had just left. Here Catherine bade the chamberlain a curt good-night, and barred the door behind his retreating footsteps, feeling as though she had at length reached a haven of repose.

No sooner had de Mortery left the room with Catherine, than Carmain, turning to the vicomte exclaimed, "Now that your lady is provided for, it is time to think of ourselves; and for me, by the twelve Apostles—I am more hungry than a wolf in winter! What sayest thou, shall we sup merrily together? "

"With all my heart," replied the vicomte, "for I am hungry enough to eat your friend Mortery himself."

"Oh," cried Carmain, "he would prove a tough mor-

sel I promise thee. But faith, he was not cunning enough for me to-night, and though he knows it not, I fairly outwitted him."

"How did'st thou overreach him?"

"I will tell thee. But you must know that he is so vain of being chamberlain to the king, that he scorns to do another man's bidding. Yet is he now doing mine in spite of himself. Did'st mark how quickly he remembered yon chamber, when I said to him that our lord commanded us to show thee hospitality?"

"And said he not so?"

"Not he, for I spoke not to him of the matter. Truly to-morrow will be soon enough for him to know. But it weighs lightly on my conscience to deceive Mortery, who cared not whether a gentle maiden passed the night on yon rude settle. Good faith, it was but a little lie at worst, and spoken in a lady's service."

"Well," rejoined d'Ervand laughing, "since it has procured a night's rest for Jeanne, I give thee absolution for the sin. But where is our supper? Or shall we go famishing to sleep, and thus forget our hunger?"

"An evil habit; a most cursed necessity!" cried Carmain. "Never sleep hungry an you wish to escape horrible dreams. *Peste!* I would I could come at that cupboard on the wall, for I wager it holds something on which we might break our fast. Come, help me move this table," and having with the vicomte's assistance, dragged the heavy table across the room, he mounted upon it and forced the cupboard open with his dagger. Standing at his full height, he was just able to reach the shelves, which he carefully explored with his hands.

"Soho!" he exclaimed, "what have we here?" and groping about, he drew forth a couple of flasks of wine,

a fowl that had no doubt come untouched from the king's table, and about half of a huge pasty, all of which he handed to his companion. This done, he leaped to the floor, and aided the vicomte to replace the table in the middle of the room. They then seated themselves and were about to begin their repast when Mortery returned looking indignant enough to find his larder rifled in this unceremonious manner. And although in his capacity of chamberlain of the king's household, he was doubtless well acquainted with the privilege and custom of prisage, and had often profited by it, he was extremely angry that it should be made use of to his detriment. But the two offenders only laughed at him, and after indulging in a few vain remonstrances and muttered threats, he stalked solemnly away, leaving them to enjoy themselves together. They sat long over their meal, and after draining the last drop of wine in the flasks wrapped themselves in their long cloaks, and stretching themselves upon the oaken settles in default of softer beds, were soon asleep. Indeed, they were fortunate in having obtained a meal and beds, however hard, for the chateau was barely furnished, and of all its grand apartments only two or three were habitable. For the duke of Brittany, always the most independent of the great feudatories, held himself aloof from the court, and isolating himself in his Duchy, seldom visited Paris and scarcely ever occupied this hotel, which had therefore fallen into a state of utter neglect. However, as it stood just beyond the barriers, it offered a convenient rendezvous for the troops which the king had drawn thither, and which now lay encamped about it ready to march at a moment's notice.

The Provost Marcel who was entangled in the web

woven so cunningly about him by the king, had sworn to admit his troops, and de Roye who had conducted the negotiation was to have received the keys of one of the gates from him on this very night. And Charles who was unwilling to entrust this delicate mission to another hand, awaited the baron's coming with ill concealed impatience, until fearing to delay any longer he had finally despatched a trusty servant to do his errand to Marcel. The hours passed slowly by, but his messenger did not return, and Charles grew restless and uneasy. Alone in his chamber he walked rapidly up and down, chafing at the delay, stopping now and then as some new difficulty occurred to him, and, with a stamp of his foot, continuing his march.

Back and forth he went—back and forth with unwearied step until the hour grew late. And the problems that perplexed him were yet unsolved when a distant church bell sounded midnight. Going to the window he threw up the casement and listened intently, while the last strokes of the bell died away in the direction of Paris. But no other sound broke the silence. The king's personal attendants had gone to rest; the archers maintained a silent watch, and around the chateau the soldiers lay upon their arms. He listened eagerly, hoping to hear the tramp of an approaching horse, but nothing announced the return of his tardy messenger, and he expressed his vexation by an impatient gesture. Then glancing upward, he saw that the sky was overspread by a slight haze, a filmy veil through which the stars shone with a softened light, a subdued radiance that fell upon the earth like a caress, and seemed faint and warm as the summer wind. A shade crossed the king's brow as he gazed upon the heavens. "A fair night," he murmured, "a fair night,

but unpropitious," and closing the casement he turned away, and threw himself into a chair. "'Tis time," he said, half aloud, "'tis more than time my messenger were here. Can it be the rascal Provost hesitates at the last moment? By heaven! if I thought he dared to play me false he should soon learn that it were safer to trifle with a tiger than to attempt a double game with me. No, no, he dare not, for he is fast entangled in the web of his own folly, and well he knows that I alone am able to deliver him. But where is de Roye? Wherefore, in the name of all the fiends, came he not hither to-night as we appointed?" He frowned and muttered to himself, then went on abruptly,— "Did I not warn him of a threatened danger if he lingered longer in yon cursed place; bid him beware of that young girl whose star rose so rapidly athwart his own? And well do I believe some misfortune hath befallen him, else would he never have failed me thus. But he is like other men—coward or fool. Afraid to lift the veil of the unseen; afraid to look upon the future, and trusting rather to the treacherous hand of chance. Strange how this mysterious power still leads men blindfold through the world, and lures them on to their undoing; strange how they overlook and oftentimes despise the little things destined to destroy them. Fools! they know not how to read the jewelled page outspread above them in the heavens, else would they see blazoned there the snares prepared for them by fate, and if they might not escape them (for who escapes his destiny?)—well, at least they would not fall into the abyss unwarned."

He rose and walked restlessly about, then seating himself at the table began to search among the parchments scattered there. Selecting two of these he spread them out before him, and examined them with fixed attention.

His expressive face reflected the thoughts that crossed his mind, and from time to time he uttered an exclamation of surprise. At length he raised his eyes, and leaning his elbow on the table, began to speak.

“The signs are favorable,” he said, “and my star still mounts toward the zenith. ‘Its light grows fainter,’ saith Andrea. What of that, since it still moves onward, while my cousin’s pales before it? And by St. Denys! it shall pale yet more ere long!” He brooded silently for a time, and his thoughts could not be divined from the broken sentences that fell from his lips. Presently, however, he took up another scroll and unrolled it slowly. But his brow darkened as his eye scanned the horoscope of the Provost Marcel, which he had desired Andrea to send to him, and which he had not yet examined. “How is this?” he murmured angrily. “The planet that yesternight just showed above the horizon’s edge hath already overtaken the feeble star that rules the fortunes of Marcel, and overshadowed it with a malign influence. Malediction! ’tis an evil augury, for if this scroll speaks truth (and when Andrea fails then none may read the heavens aright), Marcel is lost, and Paris escapes me—Paris and France!”

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHAT scenes had the night witnessed in this city of which Charles of Navarre dreamed and despaired !

Noisy banquets where Frankish warriors shouted forth the praises of the high gods, and tossed each other on their shields. Terror and dismay, shrieks of women and wringing of hands, as the Northmen sailed up the Seine, steering their course by the light of villages blazing behind them. Merovingian steeping himself in crime and debauchery until a mayor of the palace trampled him into the dust. Carlovingian bigot struggling feebly to maintain himself in his fortress of Laon, while Hugh of the northern marches snatched the kingship from his failing hands. Knights of the temple issuing mounted and armed from their chapter house, and with white cloaks flowing over their shoulders, riding phantom-like away through the darkness—whether to return, whether to die under shield, still unquestioning and obedient to the will of the Grand Master. Those gloomy torture chambers where the white cloak and red cross were of no avail to protect the gallant Templars from torments unbearable. The cruel flames that flickered over the portal of St. Antoine, and flung a blood-red glare into the night that beheld the bravest sons of the Temple stand undismayed at the stake. The noble figures of Jacques Malay and Guy of Normandy, as they faced death on that little islet opposite the palace. The ringing voice of the white-bearded old man, who, resuming the haughtiness of a Grand Master

in the very presence of death, summoned king and pope to meet him at the bar of God, and there answer for their sin. Orgies of the abandoned children of Philip the Fair.— These, and numberless deeds had the night beheld since the last Roman Legionary turned his back on his fair island city, and marched away on the road to Marseilles.

Perhaps the spirit of the night recalled these scenes as he paused and looked down where Paris lay asleep beneath the shadow of his sombre wings. Perchance he brooded over the vanished years as his glance swept slowly over the city from the church of Saint Geneviève to the ruins of the Temple. It may be that his eye rested for a moment on the hostelry of the Cerf Blanc and the throng of armed men assembled in the courtyard there, while he vaguely wondered what new memory was about to be added to those which already crowded upon him. And perchance he smiled pityingly, and veiling his face in his cloudy mantle, resumed his noiseless flight across the world.

The echo of the great bell of the Carmelite convent had reached the distant chamber of the king of Navarre, and its heavy strokes still reverberated on the air, as two horsemen rode slowly over the Grand Pont and emerging beneath the threatening portal of the Grand Chatelet, proceeded along the rue Vanerrie until they reached a street leading in the direction of the rue St. Denys. There, guided by a sudden impulse, one of the riders wheeled his horse about and gazed long and earnestly toward the Louvre, whose donjon tower loomed indistinct through the darkness. He appeared to be struggling with some emotion which he would have concealed from his companion, for he turned his back full upon

him and remained silent, until unable longer to endure the self-restraint, he burst forth.

“Stronghold of princes, refuge of the strong, curse of the people, dost thou frown so darkly upon me? Aye, frown darkly as thou wilt, giant of pride, but never again shalt thou be the dwelling-place of kings!” and turning to the astonished messenger of the king of Navarre, Marcel exclaimed: “Knowest thou the dark deeds that have been done within yonder walls? Knowest the grief and misery they have brought upon the people, the simple foolish people, who ever give their gold—aye, and their blood, to rear the fortresses in which tyrants dwell? Dost know how patiently they endure until they can endure no more, and then arise in the vain hope of casting off their chains? Yes, yes, in vain the wretched citizen, rendered desperate by grievous outrage, or driven to fury by the pangs of hunger, dashes himself against the barriers his own hands have built, until, exhausted and despairing he submits again, and bows beneath the yoke that presses more heavily and ever more heavily upon his neck. God knows how I have striven to unloose the yoke! Alas, I know not if I too strive in vain, for I am forced to lean upon your lord, to trust him more than is well,—far more I fear.”

“Say not so, good Master Marcel, for well I know the king doth love thee.”

“And well he may,” rejoined the Provost with some bitterness, “for I have broken with all my friends to pleasure him, and through him accomplish that of which I dream.”

“Of what dost thou dream, good Master Provost? if I may make bold to ask.”

“Of what?” and Marcel’s voice was almost fierce as

he replied : "Of the freedom of the citizen, of the burghers of Paris first, and afterward,—why then the peasant too may 'scape the bondage under which he groans. Sayest thou he hath failed already? Well, a second time he would succeed with Paris to uphold him,—Paris a free city! like Ghent and Liege."

"Soho" muttered the other under his breath. "A fine scheme truly, and of the devil's hatching!" And it was fortunate for him that Marcel could not see the scornful smile that curled his lip as he replied: "You say truth, Master Provost. To make all men brothers is a noble ambition. By my faith, 'tis the very theme on which the holy brothers of Mt. Carmel dwell, and since they be inspired by Heaven, doubt not that Heaven is with you"

"I doubt not that," returned Marcel thoughtfully, "but yet—" He broke off abruptly. "Let us on," he said, "the time for doubts and vain regrets has passed, one path remains and I must follow it wheresoe'er it leads."

He rode forward, his head sunk upon his breast and with a despondent air, for his heart was full of forebodings. Nor did his companion care to interrupt his reverie until observing that they had passed the gate of St. Denys, he asked Marcel whether they should not turn back.

"No," he replied, "we are near St. Martin's now and it will serve." However, he roused himself as he spoke, and spurred his horse to a gallop as though wishing to shake off the gloom that oppressed him.

Meanwhile the tramp of the approaching steeds was eagerly listened to by a group of persons standing beneath the heavy arch of St. Martin's gate. There were count Guy and Maillart, Lanard, Rolin and Robert Bonel, with twenty men-at-arms whose horses were concealed under

the shadow of the wall. There too, the civic guard lay bound, while a numerous body of citizens was drawn up a little distance away. Perfect silence reigned as Marcel rode up and called out. "What, ho! captain of the gate, how goes your watch?"

He received no reply, and raising his voice shouted, "Hollo, captain of the burgher guard! come hither I say, for I have a word to speak to you!"

Still no answer came, and flinging himself impatiently from his horse, he entered the embrasure of the gate followed by his companion. But he started back in astonishment, when he saw count Guy and the soldiers who were ranged behind him. He turned pale and would have retreated, but at a signal from Guy a rank of spearmen barred the way. One moment he stood irresolute, and then advanced. "What means this ambuscade?" he stammered, trying in vain to hide the trembling of his voice, "Wherefore are you here in arms, my lord?"

"Provost," returned Guy sternly, "I am not here to render an account to you. But know that I, count de la Roche, do in the Regent's name arrest you of high treason."

"My lord," said Marcel, "I deny the charge. What proofs have you?"

Guy laughed scornfully as he answered. "This is no time for folly, Provost, nor will I bandy words with you; I have said my say. Yet if you have aught to speak in your defence, Maillart may hear you; methinks you are ancient friends."

The wine-merchant stepped forward. "Alas!" he said, "hadst thou been warned by me thou wouldst not now stand accused of this heavy charge. Canst justify thyself, Etienne?"

“And by what right dost thou stand forth to question me, François? Since when hast thou grown so great as to dare to speak thus to me? By what authority, I say, dost thou accuse the Provost whom all good citizens obey, and what makest thou here so late, when honest burghers are asleep?”

“What dost thou here thyself?” retorted the merchant, irritated by the contemptuous tone in which he was addressed.

“Truly,” replied Marcel, “I am here that thou mayest sleep in peace at home. Dost not yet know that I have command of the walls, and make the rounds each night? And must I forsooth, submit to be chidden by thee?”

“I chide thee not, Etienne, yet well I may, for thou hast done me a grievous wrong.”

“What wrong hast had at my hands, François?”

“Thou knowest well, Etienne; why dost thou dissemble thus? But since I must remind thee, tell me how thou hadst the heart to steal away my daughter and hide the truth from me; refuse to help me in my search for her, aye, and lie to me? What had I done to injure thee; and if thou hadst a grudge to satisfy, was there no other way to seek revenge? was it not base to lay thy hands upon a girl, a helpless child, who doubtless trusted thee; to send her unprotected forth to endure, God knows what terror? Didst thou not know how tenderly she had been brought up at home, didst not remember all the perils that assail the innocent, nor even think how rude and wicked were the hands to which you gave her; nor call to mind the unknown fears and fancies and alarms that make wild tumult in a maiden’s breast? False friend, how canst thou look me in the face?”

Marcel laughed harshly. “A curse upon the doting

fool!" he exclaimed. "How should I know whither the girl hath fled, or care. Peace to thy babbling, Maillart. Doubtless thy daughter soon forgot her home and thee, and found a refuge in her lover's arms."

"Wilt thou deny the truth even now?" cried Maillart. "And wilt thou too deny that thou hast bargained with the Dauphin's foes, and sold the city to the king of Navarre?"

"That do I!" returned the Provost angrily. "Stand aside, traitor, and bid your fellows let me pass, for you hinder the sworn officer of the Regent from his duty."

"That will I not, Etienne Marcel, nor have I power to do so if I would. The noble count de la Roche commands here, and thou art his prisoner! My lord," he added, addressing Guy, "you may see the proof of his treachery in the Provost's hand; for there he holds, fast clasped, the keys which yonder fellow was to bear to the king."

"'Tis false as hell!" exclaimed Marcel, "false as thyself, false as thy daughter! Stand aside I say, or I will stab thee to the heart!"

Although Maillart strove hard to control himself, he lost his self-command at these insulting words. "Enough," he said, and his voice was hoarse with passion. "Dare not to sully Jeanne's name, dare not to call me traitor. Thou art forsworn, thou hast lied to me, and by God, thou art the traitor!"

The Provost snatched a dagger from his belt and flung himself furiously upon Maillart. "Die!" he shouted, "die, scoundrel!" and although the merchant who was an active and powerful man, warded off the blow aimed at his breast, he received a severe wound in the arm. He staggered back, while several of the men-at-arms and

some of Maillart's friends armed with axe and dagger ran hastily up and surrounded Marcel. But he, bent on wreaking vengeance on Maillart, brandished his dagger and struggled hard to break away from the hands laid upon him, while Guy cried out to him. "Yield thyself, Marcel! Madman, would you throw away your life? Harm him not," he shouted to the men-at-arms. "Hold, hold, take him alive!" But it was too late, the unhappy man, blind with rage, fought desperately, stabbing right and left, until one of Maillart's friends infuriated at receiving a wound in the face, raised his axe and striking Marcel full upon the head, brought him lifeless to the ground.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE following days were full of fierce excitement—memorable days, in which Paris resembled a sea lashed into fury by a sudden storm. The partisans of Marcel were numerous enough to make count Guy's position both difficult and dangerous. But without a leader to direct them, they exhausted their strength in furious and ill devised assaults upon the gates, which the count had seized and garrisoned with loyal citizens. However, Guy was well aware that this state of things could not be prolonged, and he lost no time in despatching a messenger to the marquis de la Rivière, informing him of what had taken place, and desiring him to urge the Dauphin to allow provisions to enter the starving city, and to hasten thither in person if he wished to re-establish his authority. The marquis sent back word that the blockade of the river should be immediately raised, and that the Dauphin would not neglect so favorable an opportunity of returning to Paris.

Accordingly, on the third day, to Guy's intense relief, boats laden with provisions began to arrive from the upper Seine and the Marne. A welcome sight to the thousands who lined the quays shouting with joy as, one after another, the precious cargoes were discharged. And when Guy proclaimed a general pardon for all who had belonged to Marcel's party, the rage of the turbulent populace quickly subsided.

The people accepted food and fair promises. They

already began to forget their Provost and to think his death a just punishment for having allowed them to starve; they tossed their ragged caps in the air, and shouted: "Live the good King and the Dauphin! live the count de la Roche; down with Navarre, death to the English!" The crowds that had but yesterday surged through the streets breathing nothing but threats and curses, frantic with hunger and rage, now sought their homes laughing as they went, jesting with their neighbors upon the sorry appearance they would make at the grand entry of the Dauphin, pacified, careless and at ease. The storm that had swept over the city with all the violence of a summer hurricane vanished as suddenly as it had arisen, and on this night of the third of August tranquillity reigned once more. Sleep slowly descended and enfolded Paris from St. Jacques to St. Martins, from St. Antoine to St. Honoré.

It was the first moment that Guy had found in which to think of his own affairs; and he was busily engaged in attempting to unravel the confusion that reigned in his mind—for the tumult and excitement of the past days seemed to him like a horrible dream—when Maillart made his appearance. Guy welcomed him and observing the worn and anxious look upon his face, inquired whether he were ill.

"No, my lord, I am as well as usual," said the merchant, "but I have much to say to you to-night, and truly, I scarce know how to begin."

"Then will I tell you," returned Guy with a smile; "of what else should we talk but of mistress Jeanne and Henri d'Ervand? And in faith I was thinking of them but now, and wondering what fate has befallen them. By heavens, I trust they are in safety!"

"I pray they be, my lord, although my heart misgives me. 'Tis very strange we hear no tidings of them."

"Yet not so strange," said Guy, cheerfully. "Bethink thee of the tumult of the past few days!"

"I like not to think upon it, my lord. Truly it has been a fearful time! Perhaps, my lord, d'Ervand feared to enter the city bringing Jeanne with him."

"Doubtless he would, my good Maillart. It would have been folly and worse. Trust me they are safe, and we shall see them soon."

"Let us hope so," said Maillart, "and now, my lord, I will tell you what perplexes me, and weighs upon my mind. I know not if the vicomte said aught of the matter to you, but the day before he went away he told me that he loved my daughter well, and asked her hand in marriage, and I confess I knew not what to answer him."

"And why should that perplex you?" asked Guy, not a little surprised. "My faith, you cannot hope to wed your daughter better than to a noble gentleman!"

"No, my lord, and I fear she loves him."

"What hath come to thee, Maillart. You fear? I know not what you mean! How can you object to what will make her happy, and be so much to your advantage?"

"I do not object, but it cannot be. There is a reason—a good reason why the vicomte must not marry Jeanne."

"It should indeed be a weighty one that would induce you to refuse such an alliance, for trust me, Master Maillart, the heirs of noble houses are not like to woo your daughter every day."

"True, my lord. I know the vicomte honors us above our worth."

"And yet you hesitate! tis strange and most unreason-

able. Look you, good Maillart, my friend has set his heart upon your daughter; she loves him too, and he will raise her to a rank that burgher maidens seldom reach except in dreams. Think you it was easy for him to brave the ridicule, the blame and scorn of all his friends; to be called simpleton, to endure cold looks, and to be laughed at for his folly in offering honorable marriage to a nameless girl? He has been frank with you, has scorned to seek your daughter's love unworthily; he offers her the greatest honor in his power to give—and you doubt—By our Lady! you doubt whether to grant his suit! *Peste!* I had better thoughts of you, but if you have a reason as you say, in Heaven's name speak, and let me hear it!”

Maillart listened very attentively, but smiling a little at the count's excitement, and he paused a moment before replying. “My lord,” he said, at last, speaking with much deliberation, “you wrong me somewhat in believing that I hold the noble vicomte's offer cheap. 'Tis true that I like not such marriages, and think the noble should wed with one of his degree; but I have learned that real love brooks no barriers, and am not so blind but that I know true love from false. I am sure your friend loves Jeanne truly and that she loves him. So they might well live happily together in spite of some cold looks, and glances of disdain from those who would be proud or envious. If this were all—if it were only the difference in station, and the noble vicomte overlooked it and wished to wed the daughter of a poor merchant, I would not say him nay, but I came hither to tell you why I must refuse, why it would be wrong for me to accept the vicomte's suit, although it is a great honor for Jeanne and for me.”

"I am waiting to hear," said the count somewhat coldly.

"It is," continued Maillart, "because Jeanne is not my child."

"What do you say, not your child! whose then?"

"My lord, a little time ago you called her a nameless girl. Alas! it is really true, and I am ignorant of her birth. Would I not then do my lord d'Ervand a grievous wrong to give her to him, and if it be so hard for him to wed the child of parents honored and respected (though I say it) in their own degree, would it not be impossible that he should choose a wife taken from the streets—a waif—the offspring of criminals perhaps, for God alone knows who her parents were."

The count remained silent, surprised and scarcely knowing what to answer, while Maillart went on: "It is true," he said thoughtfully, "I might conceal this from him, for none beside my wife know of it; even Jeanne does not dream that she is not our daughter, for she was scarce a year in age, a mere infant, when I took her from a woman who came to my door and left her in my arms. But you would not advise me to such a course, my lord, and how can I tell the vicomte that Jeanne whom I love dearer, if that may be, than though she were indeed my child, is worse than nameless? and if I tell him, how can she be hindered from learning what I would not have her know for all the gold in France."

"How came you to receive an unknown infant from a stranger; did you not question this woman?"

"No, my lord; she thrust the babe into my arms, and I was fearful she might kill it if I gave it back to her, she had so wild a look—and while I tried to frame my questions not to anger her, she disappeared so suddenly that I

sometimes think she was no woman, but a witch or spirit of the forest. And while I stood there wondering, the infant looked in my face and laughed, stretching its little arms up to clasp my neck in such a trustful way as won my heart; and so I took her to my wife. Good reason have we to thank God for sending us a daughter who has been a blessing to our home!"

"But have you never seen the woman since that time, good Master Maillart? do you remember her appearance, would you recognize her?"

"I have never seen her since that day, and 'tis unlike that I would know her now, for so many years have passed, she must be changed if still alive. But I remember her looks, her face, her dress, as if it were no longer ago than yesterday. A tall, gaunt woman with black hair, my lord, a long thin nose with a hump upon it, great hollows in her cheeks, and with small bright eyes, so bright they almost seemed to burn; and then her dress was uncouth and strange, for she wore a robe all torn and frayed coming not much below her knees, her feet were bare, a scarlet mantle wrapped about her shoulders, and her hair was full of wild flowers. Yes, I remember well enough."

"And the child," said count Guy, "do you think it belonged to this strange creature who was some mad thing perhaps?"

"I cannot tell," replied Maillart, "but yet I never really thought it hers. No, Jeanne could scarcely be the child of such a mother, for she bore no likeness to her then, and now that she is grown to womanhood she has no single feature that reminds me of her. Her dress, too, was fine and delicate, not such as peasant children are

used to wear, and she had around her neck a golden heart-shaped thing with Jeanne engraved upon it."

"Ha!" exclaimed the count, "that should have given you a clew. Was there no writing within, no device, no portrait?"

"The trinket did not open," said Maillart, "or, if so, I could not discover how; there was naught besides the name to guide us, and so we called her Jeanne."

"But that is singular, for such things mostly open. I would like to see this charm or locket, my good Maillart."

"To say the truth," rejoined the merchant, "I believe I should have carried it to a goldsmith, but I gave the matter little thought at first, and soon forgot it, for my wife laid up the trinket until Jeanne grew old enough to wear it, and then I thought, why 'tis useless to ask questions and rouse the gossip of all the old wives in our street, whose clattering tongues will drive me mad if once they learn this secret. Besides as time went on, I dreaded more and more to lose the girl, and thus it happened that I never made the search I should have done at first; perhaps I did what was not right, I do not know. But the golden locket is gone now, for Jeanne wore it always about her neck."

"'Tis a great pity," said the count, "and, Master Maillart, I scarce know what to think, but I understand your hesitation now, and ask you to forget my hasty words. Good faith! I was in the wrong to speak so warmly!"

"Nobly said, my lord," returned Maillart smiling; "'tis hard for youth to own itself mistaken; but I know well that you would not willingly say an unkind word to me."

"By my faith I would not; no, my good Maillart, and do not think me ungrateful, for trust me the Dauphin

shall know from me how you helped to save Paris for him. Ha! we were just in time; Marcel well-nigh succeeded in his aim."

"Yes, my lord, but Etienne was misguided and deceived, or he would never have gone so far. Well, well, he would listen to no warning, and followed evil counsels, else he might have done much good, for he was an able man, quick to see where the people were treated with injustice, and to devise some remedy for abuses that all of us could see, but none knew how to escape from. He was kind of heart, generous and popular; he might have been a great man, but the evil times, bad counsels and ambition overmastered him. He was my friend, I was proud of him; I little thought to see him meet a traitor's doom," and Maillart sighed as he spoke.

"Peace to the dead," said Guy. "Let us talk of the living. And on my word, though I am over young to give advice to you, and you may laugh at me if you will, yet, by heaven, I see no reason why you should make two people unhappy for such a trifling scruple! Mistress Jeanne doth honor to her foster parents, and will not shame her husband. D'Ervand is excusable for losing his heart to her I trow, such a pretty, sunny-tempered maiden—and trust me, he will not easily relinquish her. Let them wed and be happy, in Heaven's name!"

"Ha, ha! who gives such sage advice here? Aha Guy, thou rogue, what mischief art thou about now?" and the young count, starting up in astonishment, found himself confronted by the marquis de la Rivière, who, throwing his arms around him, embraced him affectionately, and then pushing him back into his chair, stood smiling in his face, and with his hand on his shoulder, talking on without waiting for a reply. "A fine surprise I gave you,

dear Guy, for I found that rascal, Robert Bonel, before the door with armor on back, forsooth (the dog hath not forgot his trade), and made him let me quietly in. Dost remember, Guy, how long the knave was about undoing his devilish chains the night we went to his hostel—you and I? Ha! you have wrought a change since then; and, Guy, let me tell you that thou hast earned honor for thyself and me in this affair. But wait, and to-morrow thou wilt see how the Dauphin receives thee—yes, and that worthy master Maillart, of whom you speak in your letters. Ha! that reminds me—”

Here, Guy, who had struggled to his feet in spite of the detaining hand on his shoulder, interrupted the marquis. “Let me,” he said, “present to you the very person of whom you are speaking; that master Maillart who is far more deserving of your praise than I, for without his aid I should have failed in this task, now so happily accomplished.”

Maillart bowed respectfully to the marquis, who looked keenly at him, and then offered him his hand, saying: “Good Master Maillart, I am glad to clasp hands with a brave man who has done a great service to France. I thank you for this in the Dauphin’s name, and in my own, for the assistance you have rendered to my dear friend, the count de la Roche.”

He then seated himself while Maillart replied: “I give you thanks, my lord Marquis, for the honor you do me, and for your kind words, but I have done no more than the duty of a loyal citizen, and am entitled to no praise.”

“But the count de la Roche says otherwise.”

“He overrates my poor services, my lord.”

“Not so, Maillart, not so,” cried Guy.

“Well,” said the marquis, smiling, “you are both en-

titled to praise. The Dauphin will know how to reward you. But I heard a most strange story to-night, and as it concerns you, Master Maillart, I would have you listen to it; so seat yourself. I suppose," he went on, "you will not be sorry to learn that the king of Navarre is breaking up his camp and dismissing his troops. I have carried on negotiations with him for some time past, and have just come from an interview with him. I found him at the old hotel of Brittany, which he was bold enough to take possession of three days ago, the better to carry on his correspondence with Marcel. After completing our affair (you shall hear the terms I made with him at another time, Guy), the king declared that he held in his hands certain proofs to show that my brother's child, who has long been thought to be dead, is still alive, and " turning suddenly to Maillart, "that she passes as your daughter."

Guy uttered an exclamation of surprise, and was about to reply, but the marquis signed to him to remain silent and allow the merchant to speak.

"Good, my lord!" said he, after a moment's hesitation. "I scarce know what to answer. 'Tis a thing hard to believe, and yet it may be true, for it is certain Jeanne is not my daughter. I have but now told the count de la Roche how she comes to be known as my child, and if it please him to repeat this, he can do so in better words than I."

Guy waited not to be urged, but quickly explained the circumstances to the marquis, who listened attentively, and then, after asking Maillart to describe the locket which Jeanne had lost, took from under his cloak a packet, and opening it disclosed the ornament which Maillart instantly recognized. He also pointed out the secret spring, and showed the wondering merchant the miniature

of the countess, which Guy declared resembled Jeanne's face so perfectly that it might have been painted from it. He displayed the locket that the king had taken away from Blanche, and said: "I have other proofs, good Master Maillart. You shall see them and satisfy yourself as I have done, before I ask you to yield up your guardianship of Jeanne, whom you should be blithe to know the rightful heiress of fair castles and broad lands."

"Yet am I not glad, my lord. For year by year she has grown into my life until it seems as though I could not give her up. Our home will be well-nigh desolate without her. We have no child to fill her vacant place, and—but 'tis selfish for me to think only of my loss when she will gain so much. My lord, when you know Jeanne you will understand my sorrow."

"I doubt it not," rejoined the marquis, "but do not grieve yourself needlessly, for if she hath a true heart she will not forget her foster parents; and if she doth, by heaven! she is no niece of mine. Look not so downcast. Hold! I have that to tell thee will cheer thy heart. Dost remember—" He was here interrupted, for the door was flung violently open, and Henri d' Ervand rushed in.

"Welcome, Henri," shouted Guy, springing to his feet, and seizing his friend's outstretched hand. "What wonderful good fortune is this? I have had no tidings of thee these four days."

"And you would scarce have tidings now, were it not for the marquis de la Rivière, who, by my faith, looks not overpleased to see me."

"How would you have me pleased?" exclaimed the marquis. "*Peste!* you burst in like a whirlwind, and spoiled my story. Nevertheless," he continued, smiling,

"you are welcome, Vicomte, and you shall tell good master Maillart—"

"What! have you not told him?" cried d'Ervand, as he shook hands with the merchant. "Has he not told you, Maillart, how he found Jeanne and myself the unwilling guests of the king of Navarre, who, I well believe, would not have scrupled to hold us close prisoners to gratify his spleen; and how he refused to come to terms with him until he promised to set us free, and how we all returned together?"

"But where is Jeanne?" asked Maillart, eagerly. "Why is she not with you? Is she safe?"

"Yes, truly is she. I came this moment from your house, where I left her, happy at finding herself at home again."

The merchant rose hastily. "I must see her. I must go to her. Pardon me, my lords, if I use scant ceremony," and he hurried to the door.

"Go, go," said the marquis, "a fair good night to you, Maillart,—and hark ye: do not forget count Guy's advice."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE stately ceremony of the Dauphin's entry had come and gone. Grave rather than gay, it was more dignified than the pageants of the succeeding reigns, although not magnificent or brilliant as were the gorgeous festivals that were soon to distinguish the Burgundian court. Poverty and hunger had of late been guests of the Parisians who lined the rues St. Denis and de la Barillerie, who shouted themselves hoarse as the Dauphin's train passed along those streets and over the Pont Mibrai, on its way to the cathedral. It was a lean and ragged crowd that surged to the foot of the lofty steps of la Cité palace, and listened to the dull address that Charles delivered to his well beloved citizens of Paris. What though they had been for months in arms against him, what though but a few days since they had rushed madly through the streets, demanding vengeance for the death of their Provost!

A few days! It was an age, a lifetime to that fickle people, living only in the present—in the passing hour! A new idea had seized upon their minds, a new prospect already opened to their view, and above all, they were no longer hungry. Therefore they welcomed their lord's return, they cursed the memory of Marcel and quickly banished it, while they abandoned themselves to the enjoyment of the games and novel spectacles provided for their amusement.

Although the marquis de la Rivière had persuaded the

king of Navarre to disband the greater part of his troops, and to accept the friendly overtures of the Dauphin, he was well aware that this reconciliation was insincere and would be of short duration. Meanwhile the king withdrew to St. Denis and held himself aloof from his cousin. Deeply chagrined at the failure of his plots, he buried himself in the hotel of a faithful partisan, and listened to the reports which he constantly received of the state of affairs in Paris: nor were these such as to revive his ambitious hopes, and he resolved to retire to Normandy. His departure was delayed, however, by an entertainment given at the Louvre, and he thought it politic to be represented there, although he himself declined the Dauphin's urgent invitation upon the pretext of ill health and the fatiguing journey he was about to undertake. Too distrustful to place himself in the power of one whom he had treated as a mortal enemy, he remained at home, desiring the gentlemen of his train to bear the assurance of his love and devoted fealty to his cousin. He passed the evening alone, absorbed in thought. Baffled for the present, he did not lose sight of the object he had in view: his subtle intellect was already busy with new devices by which to overcome the obstacles in his path, for his was not a mind to exhaust itself in one direction, or to be stayed by barriers difficult to surmount.

Where the stag must turn aside, the fox may still find ample room—where Reynard is at fault, the serpent glides with ease—and thus it was with Charles le Mauvais. He cared not whether he attained his object in a noble manner, by cunning, or by silent, deadly means. All were alike familiar to him and if one failed another might succeed. But he knew that the popularity of the

Dauphin was for the present well assured, and since he could not oppose it, he must swim with the tide. He would watch, dissemble, wait; he would cherish the ambitious dreams that filled his breast, never relinquish them and abide his time. He was aroused from his reverie by the trampling of horses on the pavement without, and touching a silver bell beside him, the summons was quickly answered by the chamberlain in waiting.

"Who has arrived, de Mortery?" said the king.

"The gentlemen who were bidden to the Louvre, your highness," replied the chamberlain.

"Is it so late?"

"An hour past midnight, sire."

"Say you so? Well, I would speak with de Carmain before I sleep; send him hither and, good Mortery, I shall not need you again to-night: I will disrobe myself."

De Mortery bowed and withdrew, while the king walked back and forth humming a gay air as he went. He had traversed the apartment but twice or thrice when de Carmain came in. "*Mort Dieu!*" exclaimed Charles, "my summons lingered not by the way."

"It reached me on the wing, your highness."

"And you took wing to answer it?"

"Yes, sire. Speed fans the flame, and love grows cold to loiterers."

"Beshrew thy Gascon proverbs!" said the king laughing. "Well, Roger, didst thou fare merrily at the Louvre to-night? did my lord duke of Normandy smile on thee, and didst thou greet him lovingly in my name? Sit down and tell me all that passed."

De Carmain seated himself. "Methought," he said,

"my lord the Dauphin liked not over well your highness's proffer of dear devotion."

"What said he, Roger?"

"Wherefore doth my cousin of Navarre not grace our hall, to-night?' quoth he.

"He keeps his bed,' quoth I. 'I fear me much, great lord, he scarce will have the strength to mount his horse to-morrow.'

"Is he so sick?' quoth he! 'God have him in his holy keeping!'"

"Amen!' quoth I."

"By the saints! you were somewhat malapert," rejoined the king with a laugh; "but what said my royal cousin to your amen?"

"By my troth, he frowned! 'Fair sir,' said he, 'you have an over nimble tongue; so please you, go and mingle with our guests.'"

"I warrant you waited no second bidding, Roger."

"No, sire, I lost myself in the crowd without more ado. There was no lack of amusement, I trow, and first I saw the merchant Mallairt kneel down before my lord Dauphin, who received him graciously and thanked him before us all, for his services to France."

The king frowned. "Services to France, forsooth! France indebted to a base trader. Christ's death! my cousin stoops too low! Well, Roger what next?"

"Then my lord Dauphin created the merchant Sieur de Bretenais, bestowed a fair domain upon him, and raised him from his knees with his own hand."

"Malediction!" muttered the king, "this insult is aimed at me, for it was this same Maillart brought the citizens to obey young Guy de la Roche, shut the gates against me and compassed the death of Marcel. De Mascon

and Toussac were his victims too—his or his partisans, and their blood that stained the very altar of St. Catherine's church, cries out for vengeance, and now, to reward the murderer of my friends ! But I know from whose hand comes that affront. By the cross, cousin of France, 'tis well I stood not by to see this scene so cunningly devised for my humiliation !” His brow contracted and his hands clenched, but he quickly recovered his wonted self-control and said carelessly : “ Our cousin is generous, truly a gracious prince : and who stood near him Roger ? ”

“ The lords of Coucy, la Rivière, la Roche, and farther off were the reverend bishop of Noyon, my lords of Venduil, Chauny, and St. Pol, besides d'Ervand and many other gentlemen. I marked not who they were.”

“ Didst see the new found niece of the marquis ? he has acknowledged her they say ! How did she bear herself among the proud dames of the court ? ”

“ Right well, sire, and as becomes a well-born damosel. The gentlemen surrounded her as though she held a court herself. By my troth, she deserves much praise for beauty, and she hath a wit would not bring shame on one of my own land. Such eyes, too ! ”

“ Waste not your time in thinking on her, Roger ; the merchant's daughter soars a flight above thee now.”

“ In good faith,” rejoined de Carmain, “ it were but folly for a poor Gascon gentleman to dream of her, even though she were not already bespoken. They say she weds with the vicomte d'Ervand within a fortnight ; and in God's name, I well believe it, for she hath eyes but for him alone.”

“ Soho,” said the king, smiling. “ How runs the couplet :—

· Ah ! Dieux ! fait ele sire qui fis ciel et rousée,
Com est Berte ma fille richement mariée.' ”

And what of the count de la Roche ? Heardst thou aught of him, my Roger ? ”

“ ’Tis whispered about that the sire de Coucy gives a great revel at his castle in the vintage season. Some say it is to be in honor of his daughter’s nuptials with the count. How the baron de Roye would rage, sire, were he alive to hear this news.”

“ Yes,” returned the king. “ God defend us,” he continued, crossing himself, “ his was an evil star ! May his soul have peace ! Well, Roger, what adventures befell thee to-night ? ”

“ None, dear lord.”

“ What, of all my cousin’s gentleman, was there not one to provoke that hot spirit of thine, or hast thou curbed it at last ? ”

“ In faith, sire, ’tis still an unmanaged steed. But God’s truth, I met with no encounter, save the challenge of some score of bright eyes.”

“ Which you accepted, ha ? ”

“ Yes, sire, for the honor of Gascony, and the confusion of the English.”

The king laughed. “ Roger,” said he, “ thou understandest not state affairs ; but let it pass, thou sayest well, and if the English beat us in the field, we Frenchmen are their masters in the bower ; and so you met with no adventure ? ”

“ No, sire. But beshrew me, I had well-nigh forgotten that as we dismounted in the courtyard, a woman seized my arm and begged to speak with you. I gave her to the charge of de Mortery.”

“ Knowest thou who she is ? ”

"No, sire."

"She may wait. I have dismissed Mortery for the night. Help me disrobe, good Roger, and do thou sleep yonder in the ante-chamber. Make haste, or we shall have brief time to rest, for we set forward toward Normandy by daybreak."

De Carmain, having assisted his master, was not sorry to be at liberty to retire, and the profound silence that soon reigned throughout the hotel, betokened that its inmates were wrapped in slumber.

The gray light of the morning was already stealing through the windows of the king's apartment, when he was suddenly awakened by a loud shriek and by the voice of Roger de Carmain. Springing from his bed and grasping his dagger, Charles approached the door communicating with the next chamber. Upon the threshold stood the Gascon leaning on his sword, and gazing sorrowfully at a form stretched upon the floor at his feet. "Sire, sire," said he, "I have slain a woman unwittingly. Mother of God, would I had held my hand!"

"What is done is done," returned Charles, coolly. "How came she here?"

"God's truth, sire, I cannot tell, for I awoke with a start, and could see naught in the dusk but a tall figure standing yonder wrapped in a cloak. I thought here is an assassin seeking the king, and thrust with my sword; but blessed Lady of Mercy, forgive me! I would have no woman's blood on my sword—or my soul!"

"Enough," said the king; "cease thy wailing and lift her up. Place her on yonder couch for she is not dead."

De Carmain obeyed, and, raising the woman as gently as he could, he laid her upon the bed where he had slept, and attempted to staunch the blood.

The woman opened her eyes and motioned to him to desist. He then knelt beside her. "I thought you were an assassin," he said; "surprise and the gloom of the morning bewildered me—I could not tell that you were but a woman. Pardon, pardon, mother, and in God's name, let me staunch this blood that flows so fast!"

She shook her head. "No, no," she gasped, "let it flow; but call him, let me speak to him."

The king had returned to his apartment to prepare for his journey, but de Carmain begged him to speak to the dying woman, and he came to her bedside. It was now light enough for him to distinguish the features of the unfortunate victim of de Carmain's sword, and he instantly recognized mad Blanche whom he had visited with the baron de Roye. Her face was drawn with pain, and her long hair dabbled with blood, but her eyes were still bright as she fixed them on the king. "It is he," she whispered, hoarsely; "Oh! he deceived me, he deceived poor Blanche with his gentle voice. But why should he care for my jewel, the one thing that I loved? Why—I can never remember. Yes, I thought to have it again, but now I shall die. Is that the reason I am no longer angry, and feel no hatred any more? Did I *dream* that the wicked lord hid my darling child in the cold pool until she was white, so white, like the pale water-lilies? No, it is true, and I was well revenged." She closed her eyes again, and the king turned away, but at the sound of his footstep she suddenly started up. "Ah!" she cried, "I must tell him, I must."

"What would you say to me, good mother," asked Charles, kindly.

"Did you not swear to give back my jewel?" said Blanche. "Yes, by life and death, and your oath is

broken." She raised herself upon her elbow, and her eyes were fixed and wild. "Listen," she said, "listen and tremble, for the blood that runs so swiftly through your veins shall soon creep sluggishly along; still you shall live, but cold, yes deadly cold! no warmth for you but once again, once more. Yonder I see you wrapped about with fine soft garments, but cold in the summer noon, still cold before the blazing fire—you stretch your arms out to feel the heat, and then, aha! what then? Flames, flames that run along your arms, and dance merrily upon your breast, and play about your head, and kiss that false, smiling mouth! When that day comes, remember—remember your broken oath." *

Her voice died away and she sank back lifeless.

Charles stood silent, gazing at the body, possessed by a vague foreboding which made him shudder, and which he sought in vain to overcome while the last words of Blanche rang in his ears.

"God! what a look the mad woman hath," he muttered. "It makes my blood run cold to see her. Can it be that one may be damned for a broken oath? Fool that I am to heed her words. A murrain on them, the ravings of a crazy hag!"

While he stood thus, a trumpet sounded from below; still Charles remained at the bedside until de Carmain ventured to remind him that it was time to join the gentlemen of his train who were already on horseback. He

* Perhaps the reader may be interested in learning that the prediction of Mad Blanche was almost literally fulfilled in the death of Charles le Mauvais, king of Navarre. Presque tous les historiens Français racontent, qu'il s'était fait envelopper dans des draps trempés dans l'esprit de vin—soit pour reanimer sa chaleur affaiblie par les debauchés.

La feu prit aux draps tandis qu'on les consait, et il fut brûlé vif—un mort cruelle et terrible! (Dulaure, *Hist d'Evreux*).

then commanded Roger to direct his servants who remained behind to have Blanche decently interred by the holy sisters of a neighboring convent, and descending hastily to the courtyard, mounted his horse, exclaiming, "We follow the road to Normandy, gentlemen. In God's name, on to Evreux!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

AUTUMN was waning fast, and the forests had already begun to clothe themselves in a sober livery of russet and dull yellow, when a small cavalcade might have been seen approaching Coucy castle. One of the foremost horsemen was the sire de Coucy, a somewhat haughty looking man of middle age, but withal a stately figure as he reined in his horse and spoke to his companion, the marquis de la Rivière.

"Shall we wait for these laggards?" he asked, glancing back at the riders who followed.

"Wind your horn and summon them, my lord," replied the marquis.

De Coucy put his horn to his lips and sounded a hunter's call. "St. Mary!" he said, laughing, "that startles them! Make haste!" he cried out as they came within hearing, "a forfeit to him or her who reaches the castle first! Come, Marquis," and spurring forward, the entire party arrived at the same moment and crossed the drawbridge together, *pêle mêle*.

"I claim the forfeit," cried the merry voice of Yolande de Coucy. "Have I not won it fairly, Guy?" she asked turning to the count who had dismounted, and stood ready to lift her from her horse.

"I must not decide between father and daughter *ma mie*," said Guy smiling.

"You win it indeed!" exclaimed de Coucy. "By my troth, the marquis and I had already drawn bridle, and

taken breath when you came up. Claim what is thine, my Yolande ! ”

“ By St. Mary ! and so I will, my father ! But here are lady Jeanne d’Ervand and her husband, and since they are our guests I demand the prize for them.”

The vicomte laughed. “ I fear,” he said “ that Jeanne doth not deserve it, and as for me, gentle St. Geneviève ! I was the last of all.”

“ Fie upon you, Vicomte ! and doth he so soon treat you with discourtesy, my lady Jeanne ? ”

“ No, truly not,” returned she, “ and I shall forgive him this first offence.”

“ Well,” continued Yolande, “ the marquis says nothing ; he shall decide,” and taking Jeanne’s arm, they entered the castle laughing as they went.

During the following week the castle presented a scene of festivity and rejoicing. There was a constant succession of entertainments for the retainers, and for the vassals from surrounding villages that owed fealty to the sire de Coucy, and the chateau was filled with invited guests. Hunting parties scoured the neighboring forests, and merry troops of gentlemen and ladies pursued the game that abounded along the margin of the Ailette, where Yolande and Guy had met with so dangerous an adventure.

Count Guy had not forgotten the jovial student, nor was Robert Bonel forgotten : both were bidden to the revels, and Lanard was in attendance upon his master. The three friends enjoyed themselves hugely, each after his own fashion.

Lanard looked at the castle from a military point of view, Rolin found much to interest him in the precious manuscripts which Bertrand displayed with love and

pride, while it must be confessed, that Robert was lost in admiration at the ease with which so many people were served with food, and did not rest until he had thoroughly explored the kitchen, from which came such unfailing abundance. The excellence of the castle wine, however, was a theme about which all were eloquent, and they betook themselves, the evening before the wedding day, to a small room where they thought they would be undisturbed, and sat down with an enormous wine jug before them.

"Holy Virgin!" said Robert, "to think that we should be here as merry as mice. Why, it must be a delusion. Surely this is the Cerf Blanc. But no, here we be in Coucy, and the Provost is dead, and the baron de Roye. Yes, and mistress Jeanne, no, I mean the noble vicomtesse d'Ervand is not mistress Jeanne, and her father is not her father, no, master Maillart is not her father—I mean the Sieur de Bretenais is not master Maillart, and the count is to be married to-morrow, and—may I be boiled alive in the devil's kitchen, if I know what other things have come to pass, or whether I be in a dream, for my head goes round and round!"

"That comes of talking so long on an empty stomach," said Lanard laughing, "'Tis not more than two hours since supper, and your tongue has wagged ever since without ceasing. You did not eat enough to keep life in a bird: two dishes of soup, well-nigh half a leg of mutton, a good sized capon, all but the bones; the best part of a pasty, and some trifles of sweet things. Truly you must not live on such slender fare, or we shall have to carry you back to the Cerf Blanc on a litter."

Robert rolled his eyes in pretended dismay. "God

forbid !” said he, “but I will mend my appetite to-morrow. Ho, friend Rolin, what are you thinking of ?”

“I ? only wondering who will mend the larder, if you should mend your appetite.”

“I can tell you, Master Rolin.”

“Soho ! and who then ?” asked the student, burying his face in his wine cup.

“He” retorted Robert, “who fills anew the wine casks you have drained since we came hither.”

“A fair thrust,” said Rolin, good-naturedly, “nevertheless I will prove that you deserve to be rebuked, and I to be commended.”

“If you do, I will eat your dagger !”

“Prepare yourself for a sharp mouthful then, and beware lest it stick in your throat.”

“You will gain nothing, and lose a good weapon,” said Lanard, “for I warrant that Robert will swallow your dagger, hilt and all to whet his appetite.”

“But the proof, comrade, the proof !”

“Well then,” rejoined Rolin, “what excuse have you, friend Robert, for making such a devil of an inroad upon the castle larder ?”

“I refuse to admit it, but what if I had—Holy Virgin ! a man must eat, and that larded capon, and the pasty, it had been a sin not to taste them !”

“Aha !”

“Wait,” continued Bonel, “and besides I wanted to describe them to Susanne.”

“Oh, oh ! Then you sought to gratify your appetite, and woman’s curiosity : fine reasons truly ! Will you make ready to keep your promise ?”

“That will I not, until I hear why you drink wine as the sand drinks rain.”

"Why, Robert, here is my excuse, and Lanard shall judge if it be not a better one than yours. You see the young count has not forgotten us and bids us welcome to the revels: my word, he is a noble gentleman, and never was fairer lady than she whom he weds to-morrow! Now mark you, I should be but an ungrateful dog, not to drink their health as often as I can: and so, by St. Geneviève! I lose no opportunity to pour out the purple wine, offering libations to the gods, quaffing deep draughts, and with each brimming cup praying the august divinities who preside over earthly destinies, to grant long life and health, honor and happiness, to the noble count and his fair lady of Coucy. Must not Robert try his teeth on steel, Lanard? Art ready, Robert. Give one good gulp, man, like the Saracen hound I once saw—Faith, he made nothing of swallowing a knife as long as my arm, two spear-heads and a sheaf of arrows."

"You must keep your promise, Robert," said Lanard.

"But 'tis an unjust decision. Holy Virgin! I appeal to my lord marquis."

"The devil! then we must e'en let you escape this time; and so drink I say, drink to the happiness of all lovers."

"Good luck and prosperity follow them," said Robert.

"Love and good wine," shouted Rolin.

"Love should be glowing,
Wine ever flowing."

"'Tis a true word," cried Robert, wagging his head.

"As true as my sword," declared Lanard.

"Or the gospels," added Rolin, "for look you, comrades. The man who loves not, and drinks not, is either a hypocrite or a knave. By Cupid and Bacchus, he de-

serveth not to live in the world—let him go sit in a cave, and bark at men who have blood in their veins ! ”

“ May visions torment him ! ”

“ Let him starve in the dark ! ”

“ Or perish with thirst ! ”

“ Everlasting purgatory be his portion ! ”

“ To the devil with him ! ”

“ Methinks you are in a merry mood, my masters. Fair fortune to all here ! ”

“ And to thee,” replied Rolin quickly. “ Come in, Master Bertrand, and stand not on the threshold : come and crush a cup of wine with us ; thou art welcome, and thrice welcome ! ”

The physician shook his head as he answered : “ I am come to greet you from my lady, who by your leave wishes to see you all.”

Lanard rose to his feet, “ Up friends ! ” said he, “ Lead the way, gentle Master Bertrand, and we will follow.”

The apartment to which Bertrand directed them was richly, though not luxuriously furnished. A polished table occupied the centre, the walls were covered with silken hangings and the floor with Persian carpets. It also contained one of those low couches, which from its form and the peculiar texture of its covering must have been brought from Constantinople ; a few carved, oaken chairs and a cushioned foot-stool. There was something indefinable about this room that suggested the constant presence of a woman, and the various articles scattered carelessly about gave it no appearance of disorder. A pair of gauntlets, a cloak lined with rose-colored satin and a plumed riding-cap lay upon the table, as though flung hastily down, and near them stood an open jewel casket. A piece of unfinished embroidery here, a silken

glove yonder, some flowers that had fallen to the floor; and yet there was nothing displeasing to the eye, for a portion of her own gracefulness and beauty appeared to linger about whatever Yolande's hand had touched. She was seated with Jeanne upon the couch, and the ladies were talking gayly with the vicomte, when Bertrand and his companions came in. The merchant, Jeanne's foster father, had risen to take his leave, and the sire de Coucy was engaged in earnest conversation with the marquis, while count Guy stood a little apart caressing a favorite greyhound, which fawned on him and leaping up, placed his paws upon his shoulders. Putting the playful animal gently down, Guy advanced quickly to the door saying: "You are welcome, good friends, I trust we have not cut short your merriment, but 'tis my lady's pleasure to speak a word with you."

"A lady's pleasure must not be gainsayed, my lord," replied Rolin, who then approached and saluted Jeanne and Yolande. His companions followed his example, although Robert hesitated and attempted to conceal himself behind the tall form of Lanard, who nudged him with his elbow and growled out: "The devil! canst not hold up thy head like a man, but thou must needs hide behind me?"

Yolande perceived his embarrassment, and addressed him kindly. "Good Master Bonel," she said, "why did you not bring your wife with you, the pretty Susanne who is such a famous housewife?"

Robert bowed and stammered, but, gathering courage at length, or inspired by the vigorous thrusts of Lanard's elbow, succeeded in replying: "Susanne is over bashful, noble madam, and feared to come, though she was well-

nigh wild with curiosity, so please you ; but Holy Virgin ! I could not persuade her, do what I would ! ”

“ Oh what a lie, Robert ! ” whispered Lanard in his ear.

“ Hold thy tongue,” returned he, wiping his brow which was bedewed with perspiration, and once more retreating behind his companion, for Yolande had turned to the student smiling as she said :—

“ I have heard much of you, good master Rolin, and hope you find it pleasant here at Coucy, though you of the University love not to stray far from Paris I believe.”

“ True, madam, yet ’tis wondrous pleasant here, and master Bertrand hath treated me with so much courtesy that I owe him many thanks.”

“ Bertrand is ever courteous,” replied Yolande glancing kindly at the old physician. “ But I have heard that you and good Lanard yonder often amuse yourselves with songs. Will you not sing for us before you go ? ”

“ Madam,” rejoined the student, “ your wishes are commands, but our songs are rude enough, and I scarce remember one would please you.”

“ Then sing one that will not please me,” said she gayly.

“ Gentle St. Geneviève aid me ! ” thought Rolin, who bowed, and after a moment’s reflection sang the following :

“ Premier est Paris amentue,
 Qui est du monde la meillour,
 Si, li doit on porter hounnour :
 Après parlerai de Provins,
 Après Rouen en Normandie—
 Mais *premier* est la belle Paris.
 En mon escrit
 Je vous mis après Jesus Christ

Ma belle amie,
Ma chère Paris ! ” *

“ This should please you who are a true little *Parisienne*,” said Yolande to Jeanne.

“ Yes,” she replied smiling, “ and so it doth. I give you thanks, Master Rolin. And now, dear lady Yolande, shall we not hear Lanard ? ” The latter made no excuses, but complied instantly, and sang in a well modulated and mellow voice :

“ Black eyes and blue eyes, brown eyes or gray,
(Glance for glance should not be strange)
Meet us and greet us every day,
Love for love is a fair exchange !
Love for love, but the lips we greet
Should smile and tremble, be warm and sweet.
Cold lips and smiles are not for me,
Love for love is my creed pardie ! ”

Yolande clapped her hands and smiled. “ Well done,” she said, “ I thank you all, and wish you a fair good night.”

Lanard and his friends then returned to the room they had left, and sat far into the night singing, jesting, and drinking innumerable healths to count Guy and Yolande. It was growing late, Jeanne beckoned her husband away, the sire de Coucy had already accompanied the marquis to his chamber, and the noise in the great hall below announced that the guests were preparing to retire. The rustling of robes upon the stairs, whispers and suppressed laughter were heard as the revellers separated, and sought their different apartments. Yolande and Guy were left alone to say good night.

* A fragment of a French song of the thirteenth century, in praise of the various cities represented at the Landit fair of St. Denys.

One long look into the depths of violet eyes glowing with a mysterious light that dazzles him, a pair of white arms about his neck, a swift wave of color flooding a throat and face pressed close to his.

“’Tis long until to-morrow, dear, but it will come at last, and then, my own Yolande. Ah, then will dawn a new life of joy and wondrous happiness for me. Until to-morrow, love !”

The passionate tender tones find an echo in her soul, and her heart is beating in quick response to his, while she murmurs : “To-morrow, dear Guy. Ah, yes, to-morrow and forever !”

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